FALSE GODS

By Percy Dearmer, D.D.

Class 231.8R Book D347
General Theological Seminary Library
Chelsea Square, New York

PRESENTED BY
Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning

FALSE GODS

BY THE REV.

PERCY DEARMER, D.D.

Vicar of S. Mary's, Primrose Hill

Author of "Everyman's History of the English Church," "The Parson's Handbook," etc.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD.
LONDON: 28 Margaret Street, Oxford Circus, W.
OXFORD: 9 High Street
MILWAUKEE, U.S.A.: THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.

231.8R
D347

64451

First impression, 1914

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
1.	Introduction: The Modern Spirit	1
2.	The Pioneers	11
3.	Mental Idolatry	24
4.	An Example	38
5.	Modern Instances	49
6.	Futile Piety	65
7.	Vicious Circles	82
8.	Christ and the Grim Images	102
9.	The Christian Anthropomorphism	132
10.	The Cult of Disease	146
11.	Pain and Vengeance	166
12.	Pain and Punishment	176
13.	Sorrow and Joy	192
14.	Conclusion	204

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_C0-AZF-141

FALSE GODS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Modern Spirit

THE cause of delusions in the past lay not so much in ignorance and wild speculations as in the quiet errors which were taken for granted, the plain factors which were unconsciously ignored. King Charles' famous jest with the fish and the brimming vessel of water is in fact the exposure of a typical human weakness. Thousands of strong men come and hammer at one of the gates that lead to the Palace of Truth, and fail to win admittance; till it occurs to some unconventional person that it might be as well to turn the key in the lock: then humanity streams in, and takes the entrance as a matter of course—only to spend a generation or two in fumbling at the next obstacle

Has it not been so in the greatest matter of all, our knowledge of God—our thoughts, that is to say, about the meaning of life, the mind of its Author, and the purpose of our being here? Some one has opened a door for us; and we are coming to see that in a right belief about God lie the goodness, happiness, and health of humanity, or (to use a word which has sunk or risen in meaning as our ideas about God and man have sunk or risen) its salvation. A very old truth, you may say, and enforced with some vigour in the Athanasian Creed. Yes, but what men in the mass deduced from such professions of faith was that their salvation (conceived of as escape from eternal torture) consisted in the acceptance of a difficult metaphysical doctrine about the personality of God. The truth of that doctrine Christendom as a whole accepts; but this does not alter the fact that men occupied themselves in disputing and dividing about it, before they had assimilated the far more important truth that God is love and light and life. After all, a Trinity of evil persons would not be a worthy object of belief, however orthodox might be our conception of their relation to one another; nor would a Trinity of imperfect persons. If

the theologians had stressed the orthodoxy of Christendom with the thought that God is altogether love (as the New Testament does), the disputes about his personality would have been carried out in a more Christian manner, and many schisms, which resulted from the violence of that dispute, would not have occurred. The silence of the New Testament about this problem of the divine personality, and its insistence upon the divine love, might well have warned us against the danger of reversing the order of their importance.

The key was in the door. Jewish prophets, Greek philosophers, and all the wise and good of the world, had been preparing its material ; and Jesus Christ had fashioned it. It was the doctrine that God is altogether light and that in him is no darkness at all, that his love is absolute, his goodness like the goodness of the loveliest human being, without any admixture of human frailty or human malice, that he is the source of all health and joy of body, soul, and spirit—that is to say, of all salvation, and that no evil or misery of any kind is in accordance with his will.

It seems a monstrous presumption to say that our own generation is opening the door

which had shut men out from the true knowledge of God. Yet this knowledge has in fact been hidden from mankind in general: taught, though it was, with extraordinary boldness in the Gospels, few have dared accept it fully, and most have not accepted it at all.

To say, then, that it is possible for us, indifferent products of the Twentieth Century, to realize what was hidden from better people in the past, is not a presumptuous conceit. It is a fact. And it lays upon us responsibilities, as it opens for us opportunities, which we had better use with the strenuous thankfulness that springs from humility; lest perchance the door be shut again.

We are not more deserving than our forefathers, but we sit upon their shoulders, and therefore can see more, which means that, other things being equal, we are better: it is just because we are their babes that things are revealed to us which were hidden once even from the wise and prudent. The average schoolboy, though in fact he knows but little, could teach Newton some vitally important things about matter, and could explain the conquest of the air to Lionardo: so too the average adult may know many vitally important

things about God, and Man, and the Christ, which an Augustine did not know. All this is obvious enough : it would be a poor compliment to St. Augustine to imagine that if, after all these wonderful centuries of thought and discovery and religious experience, he were now preparing his works for the press, he would not make considerable alterations in the manuscript.

Things once hidden are in truth now revealed to babes. That corporate intelligence, which is formed by the constant intercourse of reading and talking, and perhaps also by some undiscovered process of intellectual telepathy, becomes as the air we breathe to us ; and the very ideas that the fathers struggled against are taken for granted by their children. After all, we *are* the heirs of all the ages, though we do not always enter into our inheritance. Our descendants will transmit a still larger estate, having added capital of their own : they will also change some of our intellectual investments, for we shall be found to have made mistakes, as our fathers have before us. But let us not be afraid for this reason to use our full store of talents, to recognize and rejoice in the fact that we firmly possess truths in the

reign of George V which were unimagined in that of George IV. We know that this is so ; we know that the natural science, or the theology, or even the accepted customs of that age so little distant, would be intolerable to us now. We know that we never read its sermons. Certainly we are very far from being infallible ; but we know that, during the lifetime of men still living, obstacles to truth have been swept away which can never be set up again, and new facts of vast importance have been discovered which can never henceforward fall into oblivion.

Above all, we have learnt a new temper of thought. We have passed from the static to the dynamic view of the world ; we have acquired the historic faculty and the sense of historic perspective. The enthusiasm of natural science, for all its earlier exaggerations, has given us an exalted criterion of truth, and a habit of sifting evidence and of abjuring preconceptions and prejudices, which has become common enough to be a mark of the educated man, and which is of the highest moral as well as intellectual value.

It is not therefore an improbable thing that an age should be able to acquire a truer knowledge of God, which has so enormously

transformed our knowledge of his material works ; which has so far begun the study of the soul of man that we may justly claim modern psychology as a new science ; which has altered and is altering our fundamental conceptions of life and thought ; and which has at the same time recovered and made real to us precious ideas and whole realms of beauty and romance from ancient and mediaeval times. For the obvious shortcomings of the nineteenth century, and the hideous trail which the industrial revolution and the commercialist triumph left upon it, must never blind us to the fact that it was an age also of great literature, of great art, of just thought, of religious revival, of moral progress, as well as the wonderful century of science and invention. If we were put back into the reign of George IV, we should feel as if we were living in a bandbox.

Now all that we have learnt, and are learning, would be poor indeed if it did not give us a clearer insight into the divine character.

But this intellectual revolution has been accompanied by a moral transformation even more remarkable. There has been a change in the human heart,—a real conversion, that is

to say, in the corporate moral sense of the civilized world. There has sunk into us a tenderness of spirit—a social compunction, a sympathy for the needs and sufferings of others—which was the mark of a few rare and prophetic spirits a century ago, and is now the common postulate of the newspapers. We have not indeed conquered the slums and disease, the cruelty and disgrace, which are the inheritance of a former heartlessness that supplied no means for their control. But we hate them. Selfish and careless as we still are, we no longer accept these things as part of the natural human order, we no longer tolerate them as God's will ; but we know them as an evil of which we are ashamed, and against which we are constantly forging weapons. Already the more flagrant barbarities are extinct. The most careless tourist shudders at the dungeons and the torture instruments of past ages ; the most abandoned criminal of a normal type would not revive the iniquities of persecution which were once practised by conscientious and God-fearing rulers, and sometimes supported by men reputed to be saints. From the dawn of history until within living memory, the solemn majesty of the law de-

liberately and in cold blood treated its victims in a way for which not one sane man in England could now be found to give his vote. As late as 1793 a woman was burnt alive for witchcraft in Germany; as late as 1833 a boy of nine was publicly hanged in England for a theft of a few pence value—and on the scaffold he cried for his mother. We need not multiply instances; the barbarities of the past and the tenderness of the present, which will not allow cruelty even to animals, are well known. There has been during the last hundred years a greater wonder than any intellectual discovery or invention—a change of the human heart.

It would be strange indeed if this had produced no corresponding change in our understanding of the divine nature. It has. If it has so far done nothing else, it has killed Calvinism.

And when I speak of Calvinism, I do not mean only the system in which that brilliant young Genevan formulated the terrors of preceding ages. I would include those earlier imaginings themselves also, and the kindred attributions of cruelty to God, which, rooted in ancient savageries and black ministrations of devil-worship, have darkened the heart of man

down to our own day, and have so far left their mark upon our language that the two words of English most generally understood among the coloured races are those which associate the name of the Immortal Love with damnation.

CHAPTER 2

The Pioneers

FEW things are more remarkable in the world's history than the fact that, between two and three thousand years ago, a handful of unpopular teachers in a little nation should have grasped the idea that idolatry—the accepted tradition of mankind and the universal religion of devout persons all over the world—was in reality the one great evil to be fought, the poison of men and the scourge of nations; and, further, that this idea of theirs should have conquered all other systems of philosophy and religion, should have become the basis upon which Christianity was built, and afterwards the inspiration of Islam, and in modern times of such movements as the Brahma Somaj, and should to-day in its undying potency be causing the shrines of China to fall into decay and the fetishes of Africa to be deserted.

Such was the work of the great Hebrew prophets, the men to whom we owe Deuteronomy and the books which bear their names.

Other intuitions of Monotheism have taken shape from time to time:—the brilliant attempt of the Pharaoh Akhnaton, thirteen centuries before Christ, to establish the sovranty of the God of the sun, which failed, and faded back into the Egyptian darkness; the moral dualism of the half-mythical Zoroaster (who seems to have lived soon after 1000 B.C.) which rose in some minds to the height of Theism, but fell back into a belief in secondary deities, and dwindled. Gautama's original doctrine of non-theistic salvation cannot justly be included among pre-Christian intuitions of Monotheism; though during the Christian era, and perhaps owing to Christian influences, the later disciples of Buddhism also became theistic in their mode of thought. As regards Hinduism, the great reform in the twelfth century, A.D., of Ramanuja (who was himself born and bred near the Christian Church of St. Thomé) discovered the personality of the All-God, behind Vishnu and Vishnu's incarnations in Rama, Krishna, and others, and taught the worship of this Supreme Being; but it was a tendency rather than a religion, and has neither rescued popular Hinduism from the worship of innumerable minor spirits and idols, nor has it,

any more than Buddhism, succeeded in conquering the native Pantheism of Indian thought. After all, even the savages of Africa have, as travellers now assure us, behind their idolatries a distinct belief in an overruling Power ; but this Power is definitely outside their religion, and they have remained polytheists of the baser sort.

Far greater and more permanent than any of these was the progress of the earlier Greek philosophers to the conception of the unity of nature, which began to make untenable the old belief in a multiplicity of gods, and made the conception of a First Cause an intellectual necessity. Yet even the Monotheism of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in the fourth century before Christ, precious though it has been to subsequent thought, neither destroyed the popular pantheon nor created a living religion of the One God.

Such gropings after a pure faith, such intellectual convictions of rare minds, were valuable, not for any religions founded upon them, but as a testimony to that deep instinct for Theism which raises the most enlightened thinkers above the mass of mankind. Their witness to the ultimate demands of reason for

a Supreme Being only makes it the more remarkable that the world has never attained to a genuine religion of Monotheism, except through the canonical Prophets of the Jewish kingdoms, and their inheritors in the Christian era.

We seldom realize the novelty of the Prophets' message, or its immense difficulty. These pioneers arose in the eighth century before Christ, at a time when the highest religion known to the Jews only recognized Jahweh as the greatest among many gods, at a time when the cult of images of Jahweh was still regarded as unobjectionable; and they continued preaching their unpopular theology precisely during the period when the Jewish kingdoms were running after Baal and Moloch, and accepting Polytheism as the national religion. More than this. Not only did they preach their new Monotheism at a time when popular religion was hurrying in the opposite direction; but they dared to say, one after the other, that Polytheism and image-worship were the ruin of nations, during those very years when the neighbouring heathen states seemed to be disproving their theory, and, mounting to the height of their cruel power, could say to

the vanquished people of Jahweh, "Where is now thy God?"

It was not, then, that "God's ancient people" stood out for Monotheism against the rest of the world. They did not. A little group of men, whom we call the Prophets, stood out against the Jews themselves, and proclaimed that Jahweh was the one almighty God of heaven and earth, and that there was no other god beside him. This the Jews had never believed, and did not come fully to accept till after the hard schooling of the Captivity, when they returned to Palestine, and in the middle of the fifth century received the "Law of Moses" which Ezra brought back with him from Babylon. Nor had any ancient people before them ever believed in Monotheism. The imperishable value of the Old Testament is that it records the rise among men of this great conception, this vision of God which was proclaimed by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah in the 8th century, by Jeremiah, and the author of Deuteronomy in the 7th, and by the later Prophets after the Exile, and was in the end woven into the historical books themselves. To the inspiration of this great faith belongs the miraculous beauty of

the Psalter as we know it; and the noble Wisdom Books of the later period, in the Bible and Apocrypha, bear witness to that unquestioned establishment of a pure Monotheism among the Jews which prepared the way for Christ.[1]

Nor is it a simple conflict between Idolatry and pure Monotheism which Jewish history reveals. The issues are not so clear even to-day in Asia—for instance, Christianity is confronted with materialism in one country, spiritualism in another, ancestor-worship, image-worship, polytheism behind these, and deeper still the pantheistic principle that God is everything, and everything God. Which of these is Idolatry? What was Idolatry in the days of the canonical Prophets? The

[1] The main significant dates are—Amos, *c.* 760 B.C.; Hosea and Isaiah, *c.* 740; Fall and Captivity of Israel, 722; Jeremiah, 627; First Deportation of Judah, 597; Ezekiel in Exile, 592–570; Second Deportation of Judah and Fall of Jerusalem, 586; The Great Nameless Prophet (Isaiah, capp. 40–66), *c.* 540; First Return of Jews to Palestine, under Cyrus, 536; Rebuilding of Temple, 520–516; Marathon, 490; Mission of Ezra, 458; Death of Socrates, 399; Death of Plato, 347; Alexander defeats Darius, 333; Ptolemy captures Jerusalem and makes Palestine an Egyptian province, 320–302; Book of Proverbs, *c.* 250; Apocrypha, *c.* 200–100; The Maccabees, Book of Daniel, 167.

word has been hurled about in Christendom with little realization of its meaning ; and some of our acutest prejudices and worst confusions are due to the misunderstanding of the Old Testament (which is read without explanation to millions of Christians every week), and to a general confusion of mind as to the meaning of Idolatry.

Idolatry is usually defined by scholars as connoting two things—the worship of many gods, Polytheism (*Götzendienst*), and the worship of the true God, or of false gods, through the mediation of images (*Bilderdienst*). In general use to-day the word carries the latter sense : we do not think of Idolatry except in connection with images. We shall therefore avoid confusion if we confine the word Idolatry to *Bilderdienst*, and use the word Polytheism for *Götzendienst*, remembering at the same time that the harm done by Idolatry has always been due to the false *mental* image which the material image has created. The material images have given men a wrong conception of God ; and this has varied in so far as the worshipper has thought the image itself to be divine, or to be an accurate representation of the divine nature. With the latter supposition

the evil may be slight, may even be a relative good, as in the case of a savage worshipping some hideous image, whose ideas about God might be much improved by a mere symbol (such as a circle or an interlaced triangle) or by a fine statue in human semblance. His ideas would still be inadequate, if he thought of God as mere geometrical endlessness or unity, or as finite like a statue, but they would be better than when he thought of his god as a grinning and indecent monster.

When the earlier Hebrew Prophets laid the foundation of Monotheistic religion in the eighth century before Christ, there were two religions in possession, Henotheism out of which they arose, and Polytheism against which they contended. Idolatry was common to both forms; for until the Prophets made their protest, Jahweh was worshipped under certain forms, such as that of the *pesel* and golden bulls; and the images called teraphim and "ephods" were used and consulted as oracles by David himself, and were still taken for granted even by the prophet Hosea.[1]

[1] Hos. 3. 4. For the consulting of "ephods" see 1 Sam. 23. 9, and 30. 7. For Michal's trick in saving David's life by substituting the teraphim for him in his

Henotheism itself, the belief in one god who was not supposed to be the only god, is not in principle different from Polytheism. For the ancient Jews believed in the existence of the other tribal gods—of Chemosh, for instance, the god of the Moabites, or of Moloch, the god of the Ammonites ; and therefore belief in Jahweh was not to them what we now mean by belief in Almighty God. But their religion was Henotheism in its purest form : it taught them that Jahweh had a covenant with them on a basis of righteousness ; and it demanded the strictest loyalty, "I am Jahweh thy God . . . Thou shalt have none other gods beside me." Polytheism was not only the desertion of a jealous God who required entire devotion and trust ; it was also the following of gods who sanctioned a lower standard of virtue.

On this basis of a refined Henotheism the Prophets built. They denounced the growing Polytheism of the Jews, they enforced the old loyalty to Jahweh, and they condemned the use of images purporting to represent the

bed, see 1 Sam. 19. 13–17. The prohibition of the use of images in the Decalogue is of course centuries later than the time of Moses, whose date is about 1300–1200 B.C. David is dated *c.* 1000, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, 937 ; Ahab, 877, and Hosea, *c.* 740.

Lord. Gradually they broke away from the tribal idea, and from the old particularist notion : Jahweh, they learnt, to be really God must be the one and only God, superior to the conditions of space and time, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent; and holy, not merely in the old ceremonial sense, but as the God of truth and right as well as of unapproachable purity. They did not indeed attain to the full conception of God's universal love, nor to that of his fatherhood in the Christian sense : the words used by them for his love have the sense of preference, and are applied only to the chosen People ; and God's fatherhood is similarly used to describe his relation to the Jewish nation—not to Jews as individuals, still less to every human being of whatever race. They did not forestall Christianity by discovering the last fundamental truth that God *is* love ; but, by an intuition, an inspiration, which can only be ascribed to a real fellowship with God, they saw him revealed as the one universal Deity, righteous, wise, and holy, and as just and loving as it was then possible to conceive of justice and love. By the power of this inspiration they did what no other men had succeeded in doing, they established the belief

in the one and only God as a vital religion, the religion of a whole people ; and when, some centuries later, Greek and Roman Paganism came into general contact with Judaism, it was Paganism that faded away before the Jewish conviction of the solity of God. The Prophets in fact established for the world the great principle of Monotheism, which alone makes it possible for man to form any worthy idea of the divine character.

And they grasped the great further truth also that ethics are bound up with theology, that what men do depends upon what they believe. Polytheism and Idolatry were to them a moral matter, and concerned men's dealings with each other as much as their dealings with their Maker. The cult of false gods had brought men's pleasant vices under the sanction of religion ; the cult of the true God under unworthy images lowered men's standard of right as it lowered their conception of the divine character. The result of Idolatry was national decadence, and the result of national decadence was national destruction. This was what it was given them to see : their foresight was the result of their insight ; and events proved that they were right.

They discovered the truth that goodness, and happiness, and the ultimate success of men and women, depend upon their having right ideas about God. They realized, and they habitually taught that this truth applies not only to men as individuals, but applies to them also in that corporate mystery which makes of many persons one people, with a soul of its own that can be led or misled, glorified or depraved.

They were not infallible. Who is? To accept any human infallibility, is infallibly to part company with the truth. But they were very wonderfully inspired; they were in the very middle of the stream which flows and grows through history. They lifted the veil which had hidden God from the people; they did not lift it the whole way—the story of Moses in the cleft of the rock, unable to see the face of Jahweh, was a parable of their own limitations; but what they revealed was as much as it was possible for them and for others to understand. This does not show that they had not a real intimacy with the heavenly Father. They had: and that intimacy made them the pioneers of humanity in the greatest forward step that was ever made

before Christ. But intimacy with a superior being does not mean a full comprehension of that being: Man Friday had a real intimacy with Robinson Crusoe, loved him, admired him, learnt new worlds of wonder from him, and understood much of his character; but he could never have understood the real Crusoe, his thoughts and motives, his character and the secrets of his power; and he could only in part explain his master's reasons, or imagine what he would do in emergencies.

The wonder is that these men learnt so much. Their conception of the divine character was not perfect; their insight into the divine action was almost dim compared with the perfect intimacy of Christ: the need still remained for his coming to correct their limitations; the need still remained, after his coming, for the Christian saints and seers of all ages to drag men's minds up to the revelation of Christ. But the conception of the ancient Prophets was very wonderfully in advance of their age, and they were true to it: they were the great discoverers of God in the pre-Christian era, and their knowledge can only be explained by the fact that they found their way to a life of friendship with the heavenly Father.

CHAPTER 3

Mental Idolatry

EVEN in that crude image-worship which is the lowest form of Idolatry, the evil is spiritual and not material. The image itself is nothing : the false conception of God which the image creates is everything. Even when men thought that an image actually was identical with their god, or in some way compelled the divine presence, the error lay still in the notion that Deity could be reduced or limited. There was truth in the idea that God was in the image ; for God is everywhere — the *logion* " Cleave the wood, and there am I," we know contains a truth, whether it be an authentic saying of Jesus or not. The error lay in thinking that the wood or stone was an adequate expression of God. There was also truth in the belief that God's presence could in some way be focussed in an object or by an act of devotion : when two or three are gathered together, he is in the midst of them ;

this has been maintained in the Christian Church by the sacramental system, and certainly not least by the Quakers, who have rejected that system ; it is in fact common to all forms of Christianity. The error of Idolatry lay in thinking that God was limited by men's attempts to seek his presence, that he dwelt within the image and not everywhere.

When, therefore, we probe the nature of image-worship, we are brought to the conclusion that its error lay in the false conceptions to which it gave rise. Idolatry is always the use of a false mental image of God (or of gods, in the case of polytheistic Idolatry). Conversely, the use of a false mental image of God is Idolatry, even when no material image is made. That is why Idolatry is still flourishing to-day.

Polytheism has been long dead in the civilized world ; and Idolatry in its primitive form is dead, since the worship of God through the mediation of material images is no longer a reality to us. Some may decorate a statue of the Virgin Mary with flowers, others a statue of Lord Beaconsfield ; but the cult of an image not supposed to represent God is

not Idolatry. It is not here that our modern danger lies.

Our sins and errors to-day come from Mental Idolatry. It is this that has taken the place of the old, since divine images disappeared in the twilight of the gods. It is such spiritual idolatry that is now the poison of men and the scourge of nations—the making to ourselves false mental images of God. Polytheism used to have its idols of wood and stone; but as soon as men conceived of one only God, it was clear that he must transcend form and space, and that statues or pictures of him must be meaningless. Monotheism has only its mental images. But the principle of false worship is the same: Material Idolatry was wrong, not because statues or pictures in themselves are wrong, nor because any form of art is wrong, but because such representations gave a false and petty idea of God; they led men to worship the work of their own hands, to mistake the creature for the Creator, to think of God as a man, or a bull, or a flaming sun. Material Idolatry was in fact wrong, not because it was material, but because it was both the effect and the cause of errors which were spiritual.

Material Idolatry was but a crude form of Mental Idolatry.

This it is that gives their immortal value to the old Prophetic writings. They are fresh to-day because the evil which they denounced has only changed its form, and because the good which they proclaimed is still an ideal which we have not reached. The essence of their message was that the virtue and happiness of man depend upon his having right ideas about God. We are learning it still. It is the highest truth man has to learn. Every Christian prophet belongs to their goodly fellowship in the crusade against Idolatry, and is known by the fruits of goodness and happiness which he brings forth.

We have distinguished Idolatry from Polytheism. When our minds are clear about this, it becomes obvious that we must distinguish both from the adoration of any human being. We cannot in any true sense "idolize" a child or a friend; and lovers, though they may be guilty of imperfect discrimination, are neither image-worshippers in their devotion nor the worshippers of false gods. The devout lover worships his mistress: let him do so with all his heart! all we need fear for him is lest he

cease to worship her when she becomes his wife. We can in fact love a human being blindly, foolishly, selfishly, and we often do ; but we cannot love a human being too much. Our sin is that we do not love others well enough, that our near love is short-lived, our far love short-sighted. The idea, indeed, that human love prevents men from loving God is profoundly wrong and unchristian, the truth being, as St. John says, the exact opposite—that we cannot love God unless we have first learnt to love our brother.

Nor is it either Polytheism or Idolatry to worship a human being who has passed into the spiritual world. The cultus of saints has often been called Idolatry in modern Christian controversy ; but the charge shows a fatal confusion of ideas : to argue that such worship is sentimental, or a waste of time, or foolish and misplaced, is legitimate (whether the argument be well-grounded or not) ; but to call the worship of human beings by the name of Polytheism is simply untrue ; and it is equally untrue to dub as Idolatry the cult of images that are supposed to represent men and women. Still more untrue is it to use the word of the invocation

of saints ; since to ask a person to pray for one is to assume that such a person is not divine, and even to ask him or her to help one is only to say what we are constantly saying to our friends on earth. Such devotions may be mistaken ; few would deny that they have been greatly abused : but they are not Polytheism, and they are not Idolatry.

The Iconoclasts in the great Christian controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries attacked, not indeed the invocation of saints, but the use of all images of whatever kind : they were moved to this partly by the abuses of a still surviving paganism, partly by the rivalry of Mohammedanism, which has always been iconoclastic, and partly by an uncritical use of the Old Testament. Paganism did still survive ; for though philosophy and the Christian religion had brought the civilized world to believe in the one supreme Deity, the belief in inferior gods was not dead : St. Paul himself had spoken of them as daemons, and the early Christian Fathers were in the habit of regarding them as real but evil spirits ; many still worshipped them, others Christianized the old habits by substituting good spirits for the evil and worshipping the images

of angels and saints. The whole matter needed the severe attention of the Church ; but the Iconoclastic Controversy gave a formal and outward character to the problem by concentrating itself with fury on the use of images ; it confused men's minds for a thousand years, and blinded them to the real and constant evil of genuine Idolatry. The Iconoclastic Emperors of Byzantium no more taught people to worship God in spirit and in truth than did the Turks, when they replaced the ikons of St. Sophia by texts from the Koran. If only they had been content to proclaim the goodness of the Infinite God, to exalt evangelical Christianity, instead of trying to substitute the Old Testament for the New, how many false gods might have been for ever destroyed!

For the truth is that every one who sets up in his mind an unworthy conception of God, does believe in a false god, and that which he worships is not the heavenly Father whom Christ revealed. We may perhaps call this imaging or imagining of pettiness and evil by the name of Cacotheism ; and say that, since that *Götterdämmerung* which was almost over by the ninth century, it has been the

literary rather than the fictile arts which have maintained Cacotheism and thus kept men back in that false imaging of God which is Idolatry.

One is here tempted to pause, and ask whether Christendom as a whole has ever realized that Cacotheism is the essence of Idolatry. How fantastic have been the distinctions which men have made in order to escape from this error! How blindly the Iconoclasts of the ninth century thought to destroy it with axes and hammers! For a thousand years the Eastern Church has rejoiced in metalled pictures and expressed horror at statues. The Puritans hired men to smash both images and pictures; and yet worshipped the god who was supposed to have killed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their wives, and little children, and slaves, because they murmured against Moses, and who was supposed to have been angry with King Saul because he did not hew the captive King Agag in pieces. Their descendants still attack Roman Catholics and the Christians of the Eastern Churches for asking the prayers of the Saints, a practice which, be it right or wrong, cannot conceivably be idolatrous; and they do not see that the real evil of the popular devo-

tions in countries like Ireland or France is the petty and formal conception that is formed of God himself. Have men ever understood? Our grandfathers very commonly regarded the cross as idolatrous (though it could not possibly be a representation of God); yet they filled the devotional books of their time with crude drawings of symbols and divine Persons,—drawings which still shock us when we turn over the yellow leaves and remember that these ugly woodcuts were supposed to represent the Almighty. Did not we, in fact, nearly all get our childish, almost ineradicable ideas about the heavenly Father from some such sources as these which I have mentioned?

The fantastic distinctions continue even now to exist. Anglican Chancellors still gravely argue in court as to whether a crucifix over a rood-loft can be 'used for idolatrous purposes.' Why is there no such danger? because we are not savages? No, they say, but when the rood is accompanied by the figures of St. Mary and St. John, it becomes a 'scene from the Gospels' and therefore not idolizable! Nonconformists have got over their prejudice against stained-glass (their predecessors having destroyed nearly all that was worth having);

and now rejoice in setting up this most brilliant and conspicuous form of picture ; but a modest oil-painting in a frame is not to be seen. Anglican congregations for the most part also still refrain from oil-paintings, but, in odd reversal of Eastern custom, rejoice in statues, so long as they are in the crude stone and are what is called 'architectural' in character. Yet even here there is a curious distinction : statues of the most gorgeous colour are now without question accepted by lawyers and the public, if they are in the very place where one would imagine they would be most liable to 'idolatrous use,' namely in the reredos over the altar. Lutherans, on the other hand, have proved the baselessness of all these fears by retaining and restoring multitudes of gorgeous mediaeval roods and statues in their churches, and at the same time importing into their churches the subtle atmosphere of the museum.

What a curious range of customs and prejudices Christendom presents ! From the worshipper who addresses his prayers to some half-mythical saint, to the worshipper who seeks salvation by reading about Jahweh in Genesis or Judges, what different ways of seeking God ! At least it is true that Christendom has not yet

arrived at a clear mind as to what does and does not constitute Idolatry.

But if Idolatry means the worship of God under a false mental image, then which of us is altogether free from it? No one now expects to hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn, and few are left to think that a picture of an old man with a grey beard is a serious representation of the Almighty; but the painting by thoughts and words of false images, the distortion of the divine character by our own base imaginings—this form of idolatry has been always with us: men no longer attribute lust to the divine character, as once they did, but some do still attribute to him cruelty more evil; they have so travestied the Name they professed to hallow as to set up a false god in the name of Christianity; at the worst, they have made religion into a devil-worship; at the best, popular thought has seldom failed to smirch in less or greater measure the Name which is the image of the Eternal in our minds.

Which of us is altogether free from it? To accuse others of idolatry may be a way of falling into it ourselves. We can only escape

it by remembering, as the most constant habit of our minds, that the essence of Idolatry, which remains in these modern times when its earlier accidents have disappeared from us, is to have a false conception of God; that this false conception of God is, as the Prophets saw, the greatest of all evils, and the cause of all spiritual death and moral obliquity, of all decadence, misery, cruelty—individual, social, national, and international; and that the conquest of wickedness, folly, and disease lies in the true understanding of the nature of God. To know God! We talk of this as if it were an easy thing: we forget that it has only come to man slowly as the result of increasing purity of heart, honesty of thought, spiritual insight; we forget that even in Christendom it has not yet come to masses of men, that the best of us are but backward scholars, and that even the noblest men are often dragged down by the corporate ignorance. We forget that if we knew God, if we only understood what he is, his kingdom would be already come on earth.

And if it does seem that our age is having a fuller revelation of God morally, because certain misconceptions of God's love are dropping

away from us, and we are learning to believe that no evil is of God—(the very slums, the very fevers and plagues were supposed to be of him when we were children); if a moral conception of God is becoming more easy, yet still the right knowledge of God intellectually will be hard, because in the realm of the intellect we are less helped by intuition. Moral revelations have this about them, that they blaze in upon us, and we *know* them to be true. Intellectual revelations at first only set us arguing, and we do not all know them to be true until the generation that disputed about them has passed away. Therefore it is that great moral principles have moved mankind long before great intellectual truths were commonly accepted,—not because these last are higher but because they are more difficult to prove, and because men's minds are more diverse than their hearts. Yet it surely must be true that to know God as fully as he can be known from our plane of life, we must rightly know his wisdom as well as his love; and that, in so far as we find our way to his presence, we shall be wise as well as kind; that perfectly good men would agree even about politics and would admire the same things even

in art. For in so far as we truly know God as he is, we shall agree together ; and the increase in the mass of commonly accepted truth is one of the signs that mankind is growing in the knowledge of God.

Our forefathers were often violent in their efforts to obtain orthodoxy, and often singularly formal in their ideas of what orthodoxy is. But we, in our right reaction against their intolerance or cruelty (which were caused by their imperfect moral ideas of God), or against their scholasticism (which was caused by their imperfect intellectual ideas of God), are apt to forget that they had the root of the matter in them. For it is supremely and fundamentally true that he who would be saved—the man who would have health of body and spirit, or the nation that would be happy and strong, must rightly think about God.

To think wrongly is to have the taint of idolatry, to glorify our wrong thinking is to set up false gods ; and it is idolatry that dooms nations and poisons the world.

CHAPTER 4

An Example

MEN, we conclude, are good or bad in proportion as they have true or false ideas about the Eternal Spirit who is the Source of all life, virtue, wisdom, and beauty. The greatest and most certain generalization of history is that untrue and immoral beliefs about God, and the worship of him under false images, corrupt human society and cause nations to decay. Professing themselves to be wise, men become fools, and because they change the glory of the incorruptible God for the resemblance of an image of corruptible man, they fall into a reprobate mind and their hearts are darkened.

Such was the verdict which St. Paul dared to frame against the imperial society of his day, the heir then of the ages, and the mistress of the glory of the world; and he clinches it with a list of mean and gloomy vices, of infamies, brutish, arrogant, and merciless.

Six centuries afterwards, a new example arose, which has branded the lesson upon the history of a thousand years and still scribbles it over our geography to-day. The map of that Mediterranean world, which is the ancient matrix of our civilization, gives us all the evidence we need. Islam is the proof before our eyes of the devastating results of a false theology.

Islam has set up a false image of God, an image conceived in human material, a god with the heart of natural man, sanctioning man as he is unregenerate, and rewarding him according to his unregenerate desires. But the tragic thing is that Islam arose as a great protest against Idolatry and Polytheism ; it was an attempt, and a magnificent attempt that succeeded for centuries almost beyond the daring ambitions of Mohammed himself, to destroy that worship of false gods, which he realized to be the curse of the Arab tribes around him. He believed passionately in the truth that there can be only one God ; and he was an iconoclast, if ever there was one : he believed too in the great tradition of the canonical Prophets, and reproduced the Hebrew Scriptures as accurately as he could ; and he borrowed extensively from

such Christian teaching as had reached him from Ethiopic sources and from the apocryphal books which came his way.

If Idolatry could be killed by the destruction of material images, Mohammed was the most powerful extirpator of Idolatry that the world has ever known. His sole message was that there is one God, and he God's chief prophet. His followers carried out their mission with fire and sword, east and west, to Persia and India, to Syria and Egypt, and almost round the whole expanse of the Mediterranean world, swamping the ancient Greco-Roman civilization in Africa, ruling for centuries in Spain and in Greece, penetrating in one age into France, in another into Central Europe, held back only from Italy by the Alps and the sea. It was not till the nineteenth century that the Christian nations began decisively to strike the balance against Mohammedanism; and even to-day Moslem missionaries are carrying their message southward through Africa. Such have been the enormous power and range of a religious movement which concentrated itself upon the external purity of Monotheism, and which attacked every form of image-worship. The first Mohammedan conquerors sincerely thought

that the Churches of Eastern Christendom were sunk in idolatry: a thousand years later many Englishmen shared the idea; and it was a common sentiment at the time of the Crimean War that we were rightly allied with the monotheist Turk against Russians, who were supposed to be idolatrous because of their prostrations before ikons.

If God could be found by the simple process of declaring his unity, how splendid a faith Islam would have been! If God were lost by the mere act of making images and worshipping saints, how complete would have been the failure of Christianity! But Islam has failed, and Christianity has progressed, because God is only found and known in so far as men realize his true character.

The Turks are a people with many virtues; no Englishman has worked with them who has not liked them; their mixed blood (the greater part of which comes from Christian mothers) is excellent material. What is wrong with them is their religion. There are indeed thousands of men whose blood is the same but who are Christian, and who do not share their stagnation or degeneracy; there are thousands of Christian renegades who do;

and this is so much the case that in the Balkans a "Turk" means a Moslem, because the distinction is not one of race but of religion.

It is necessary to emphasize this, because there has been among certain of our own folk, who owe all that they are to the Christian civilization, a passion for dishonouring their spiritual mother. For the moment, the crimes committed by Christians during the recent Balkan Wars form the staple argument of such people; at other times it has been the cruelties in Russia; earlier it was Spain and the Inquisition. In these pages I have not belittled the shortcomings of Christian nations, nor hidden the gradual nature of their development towards the teaching of Christ; but it is surely remarkable that the very nations which are cited by such critics are those which have had their Christian civilization retarded by centuries of Moslem domination. Spain was under the Moors from the eighth century till the dawn of the Reformation; Russia, when but recently Christianized, came under the Tatars from 1240 to 1480; and the Balkan States after five centuries under the Turks are but lately free—the wonder is

that they preserved the seed of their life so pertinaciously and have recovered with such miraculous rapidity.

The obstinacy of the human heart, even among the elect, the difficulty with which the Christian nations have gradually assimilated some part of the teaching of Christ—this is indeed the principal theme of the chapters which are to follow. The lump is heavy, and the leaven works laboriously. But it does work. The vice of Islam is that it has never stirred any unrest, for it is itself part of the lump. As it finds man, so he remains—and woman remains at the level where Mohammed found her. There is no struggle because there is no disconcerting ideal, no shame, no repentance, no recovery. We cannot say of this religion that its adherents are unfaithful to the principles of their founder. Indeed, no prophet has been so loyally followed as Mohammed, no scripture has been obeyed with such dogged thoroughness as the Koran. The system has been carried out to the letter; it has run its course side by side with Christianity for many centuries, and has failed because of its very success.

Mohammed's followers were magnificent

human material: it would seem as if there was nothing that might not have been made of the Moors and Saracens. They did reach in some places a high degree of culture; Persia produced her mystics, poets, and saints; Arabs for a while were foremost in science; the Moors lived gorgeously in Spain, the Mohammedans of India made great empires, even the Ottoman Turks, barren as they have been in literature, science, and art, once produced great military leaders. Yet over all the vast realm of Mohammedan conquest a strange blight has lain. Barbarism has followed in the wake of those missionaries of Monotheism, stagnation, and dissolution.

Splendid and commanding, the disciples of the Prophet marched over the civilization that Greece and Rome had built up; they were no worn-out race, they had no weaklings among them. Yet where they went, they seared the ground; where they passed, they left ruins behind them; where they stayed, decadence overtook them; where they still are, the very cities have forgotten they once were great; the lands from which they have in recent years been driven back have leaped immediately into the plane of civilized life, as

a bent rod springs up when the weight is removed. Servia, Bulgaria, Greece, have educated themselves in a few decades, and are vigorous members of the civilized comity of nations, their very faults the faults of turbulent youth. To pass out of the Moslem realm has been to pass from misery and massacre into the region of culture and light. Asia Minor remains a chaos of misrule, its very charm to the traveller being the picturesqueness of an arrested civilization that has not altered for a thousand years. Africa, the Mediterranean Africa of Thebes, Alexandria, Cyrene, Carthage, once so prosperous and cultured, became a heap of ruins—a few pillars here, the broken arches of an aqueduct there, remaining as witness of what once the country had been. A false view of God was imposed upon it twelve centuries ago, and it has been given over to the anarchy of wandering tribes till our own time. We think of what the cradle of our civilization was, before the faith of Islam swept up from the South as far as Gaul and crept on through the near East as far as Germany. We look at the enthralling map of the ancient Mediterranean. Here the experiment of a false view of God has been

fully tried: only Italy has continued her Christian civilization unbroken; Spain has not even now recovered, Greece has but recently begun her new life, Egypt and the African coast are being slowly reclaimed from barbarism by European officials. Syria and Asia Minor remain enchained in darkness. Where are they, the centres of that ancient stupendous civilization which was built up round the shores of the Mediterranean? We know that a new Athens and a new Thessalonica have only been founded again through the disappearance of Islam; we know that only after a change of religion can we hope to see a new Adrianople, a new Byzantium, a new Troy, Ephesus, Rhodes, Tarsus, Antioch, Tyre, Damascus, and it may be one day a new Jerusalem.

It is all a matter of theology. The historian made no rhetorical statement but a true generalization, when he said that there is no fertile land which Islam has not made a wilderness, no wilderness which Christianity has not made fertile. Columba, Augustine, Paulinus found Britain barbarous, and taught it a new view of God. In the very years when they were doing this Mohammed was forming his new theology; and while England was in

process of conversion, civilized Syria was brought under Islam. Nearly thirteen centuries have passed, and Syria has become what Britain was.

It is all a matter of theology. Mohammed broke up the idols, but in doing so he made men bow before a celestial Sultan, a relentless autocrat, a deified Fate; he instituted the worst sort of Idolatry, for he made God in his own image. His teaching has kept men down at their own level, and women beneath them, because it kept Allah there. The Mohammedan races have been tried and found wanting; but there was nothing wrong about them except their Mohammedanism. They have been great oppressors, but they have also been victims, the victims of their creed—its cruelty, its intolerance, its lust, its obscurantism, its fatalism. Often the Christian nations have been false to their religion, and have sinned in like manner; but the Mohammedan nations have sinned because they were true to theirs. Both were digged from the same pit; but the children of Mohammed have remained at the pit whence they were digged, because their founder changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible man.

We need not go back to the obsolete mythologies of the ancient pantheon for examples of the paralysis which is produced by unworthy conceptions of God. The principle has been slowly worked out again in blood and tears during the Christian era. It used to be the custom to speak of Mohammed shortly as the False Prophet; and the description is a true one. For a false prophet is not a prophet who is false to himself or a liar to others: a false prophet may be a man who is perfectly sincere, but who has a false idea about God.

And we have been told how to discover such men. We are to know them by their fruits.

CHAPTER 5

Modern Instances

WHAT, then, do we think about God? In the answer to this question lies all that really matters. Upon the answer depends all that men do, and are, and are becoming. The fate of nations, and the future of the race, and the fulfilment of eternity depend upon it. The answer concerns not religion only, as religion is generally conceived, but all life; for all life belongs to religion, and religion is the right way of handling the whole of life. True religion is Wisdom: ethics and faith, and science and art are included in the true Wisdom which many of the later thinkers before Christ described with such noble breadth and with such beauty of poetic intuition. And Wisdom is to give a right answer to the question, What do we think about God?

Grubbing for inadequate causes, students used to attribute the greatness of certain nations

to their geographical position, their climate or their coast-line, their trade, their military successes, and even (among some nineteenth century writers) to their diet. But the greatness of nations has been due to one cause, their religion. The strength and the weakness of nations, their rise and their decline, have been the result of their ideas about God : the decline of the Roman Empire was due to this cause, the rise of the barbarians upon its ruins was due to it, the gradual triumph of the Western mind, the decay of the great cities where Islam ruled, the long stagnation of Asia, and its late stir of awakening, the patient might of Russia, the cheerful confidence of America, the self-reliance of our own Dominions, the recovery of Greece, the persistence of Jewry.

The finest geographical position in the world had not saved Constantinople ; the natural richness of Asia Minor had not prevented its extinction. Coast-lines and climate have remained in continent and island. China has been always clever and commercial, Japan has been always warlike : ingrained characteristics have persisted. The Far East is changing now because its religions have changed—the tablets in honour of Confucius are being destroyed,

shrines are deserted, temples are falling in ruins; in 1911, 4,600 students in the Imperial University of Tokio, out of 5,000, had renounced the religion of their ancestors; in 1910, the Japanese Minister of Education sent for the heads of the Christian Churches to ask for help in the moral training of the young, because the Government's secular system was failing. For good or evil, when nations change, it is because their fundamental ideas about God and man change.

The fate of nations, in fact, depends upon their religion because religion includes the whole of life; and what a modern writer has called the great universals are but branches of the spiritual Wisdom. "Science, which has limitations neither of race nor class, Art which speaks to its own in every rank and nation, Philosophy and Literature which broaden sympathy and banish prejudice": even these, the "universals" of Mr. Wells, are not the mainspring of life, they exist because of our faith in ultimate truth and beauty, they are possible because we believe that life has a meaning, and men a message; these universals have escaped the limitations of race and class because our ancestors

learnt slowly, and much against their will, that in the true Wisdom there is neither Greek nor Barbarian, neither bond nor free. And because those Christian ancestors believed that humanity could reveal truth, and that the truth could set us free, they began to climb—and we are still climbing—out of antipathy, suspicion, and prejudice.

Some measure of mutual confidence grew up in the world, some budding standard of universal fellowship ; and life gradually ceased to be a succession of raids ; better relations between men became possible ; women grew into freedom, for seclusion and the veil are the sign that a man cannot trust even his friends ; Christianity inaugurated a new standard in East and West alike ; a network of universities established the brotherhood of learning ; private huckstering gave place to international trade ; the clearing-house grew out of the bazar, and interest out of usury, because people could trust one another.

Sometimes in Christendom itself the official Church has been scared at the rebellious vigour of her progeny. But, after all, if you *will* teach that every human soul born into the world is of infinite value, what else can you

expect? And at her worst the official Church never taught less; the message of Christ was often obscured by the very magnitude of the lump which it was required to leaven; but this, the heart of it—that God is love and that man is precious—was never consciously denied.

As a matter of actual fact, the nations which are great to-day are not great by virtue of their art (which it must be confessed is in some branches rather weak at present), nor by virtue of their philosophic capacity, in which they are inferior to the Indian peoples, nor even by any special aptitude for natural science, which the Arabs once possessed in as high degree. They are great because of a greater Universal than these three universals; because of a conviction which has been driven into some for ten centuries, some for twelve, some for sixteen, a conviction which once ran clean against their natural ideas, a conviction which is even yet but partly understood and partly carried out, but which is now in our blood and underlies our whole civilization—the conviction that every man and woman is beloved and precious, with a value that can only be gauged by the Cross, and that all men and women are brothers and sisters in a family of which God is the Head—

the faith in the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God.

This inner Wisdom has enabled us to make good use of Art, Philosophy, and Science, to develop them to great ends. It is not Art that matters (the monuments in Kensal Green cemetery are art), nor Literature (the broadsheet of a quack-medicine is literature), but the spirit which inspires them, and the use we make of them: there is no necessary splendour in painting canvas or printing paper. It is not Philosophy that matters (every human being has a philosophy), not thinking, but clearness and courage in our thinking, and that unintellectual quality, the love of truth. Nor is Science a good in itself, unless our collection and classification of facts is in true relation to the Whole, and unless our application of them is used to save life and not to destroy it. These things spring from love, and are good in so far as they are inspired by love; they spring from the love of the invisible things which are eternal, of truth, beauty, goodness; and they work themselves out in the love of the visible lives of men.

It is therefore important to believe that truth, beauty, goodness are in the nature of

God, and that religion is false if it be divorced from science, philosophy, art, or ethics. If we do not believe that truth, or goodness, or art are of the nature of God, our religion and our life will be obscurantist, or cruel and vicious, and we shall worship ugly idols. The secularist and the ascetic may deny this, following one upon the other; but we may leave them to their mutual destruction.

Official religion may sometimes in part deny it; but, then—such is the strength of our Christian conviction—men arise who call themselves atheists or agnostics, and refuse to believe in the official religion. They continue to believe in truth, beauty, and goodness, and vindicate the attributes of God by refusing to worship the Image which has been set up—the image from which one or more of those attributes has been removed.

In truth, were not many of these honest doubters the real promoters of orthodoxy? and has not the Christian religion got back as much good from the rebellious children as she had given to them? How many thinkers revolted in the last century because they were told that God said the world was made in a week? Such loved the truth of God.

How many artists revolted because they were told that God desired to be worshipped in the gloom of ugliness? Such loved the beauty of God. How many moral prophets revolted because they had been brought up to think that God lost his temper with the world, and was then partly pacified by the sight of blood —the blood of his own Son—but was still determined to torture the whole human race, with the exception of a few thousand fortunate persons of one's own way of thinking—men, women, and children being consigned to this endless torment, not for any fault of their own, but because God had so determined? All this has been taught and believed, and the traces of it have not yet been entirely removed. Once such ideas were held by many, once they were the dominant creed. In revolt against them, men turned away from credal religion altogether, because they believed in an ideal goodness—in the goodness, really, of God. They had too much Christian blood in their veins to believe in a God without truth, beauty, or love.

Certainly the rebels did not win the whole truth. They were often iconoclasts rather than builders, as are the freethinkers of France

to-day in their revolt against the reduced God of Clericalism (using the word as it is understood in France), though they too, according to M. Paul Sabatier, are recovering from their irreligion. The faith which the rebels attacked had at least clung fast to God's Personality; and, after all, the harsh logic of the Calvinists' creed was continually modified in practice by their loving familiarity with the New Testament. Calvinists and Clericalists alike have always possessed a plentiful leaven of Christianity. They have tried to live strict and consistent lives; the intensity of their faith has enabled them to make great sacrifices. They have, indeed, like other men, been better than their creed. Their only crime has been that they have taught men not to think rightly about God.

Thus it is that men often turn away from what they imagine to be God, and look to Science, Art, and Philosophy for deliverance, forgetting that these are nothing unless they be the expression of true Religion, that they spring out of faith in God and Man, and are true only as they are the servitors of Wisdom.

What, then, do we think about God? That

is what matters. Our whole life will turn upon that; and the corporate spirit of our race will grow from our common thought.

Do we in any degree think of him as the extreme Calvinist thought? Then in that degree we think of him as less just, less merciful, and less good than the first man we may meet in the street. At the worst, we may be setting up some idol modelled upon the inmate of a criminal lunatic asylum.

Do we think of him as Clericalism is sometimes led to think, a Deity manifested in sacristies and imprisoned in tabernacles, regulated by clergymen and dependent upon the hands of bishops? Then we have put the measure of our own small minds upon the Infinite; we have set up an image against which the common sense of the average healthy man revolts; we have destroyed the very fellowship for which we plead; and the world, wiser than we, will march on without us.

Do we think of him as a partisan, who has committed himself to our own Church or group, and has denied his truth to other men, who is continually egging our party on to score advantages off some other? Then we shall be always turning to our own sect for

inspiration, and not to God; and whatever rays we get of his truth will be distorted by the prejudices or the passions of men. Our idol will be made in the image of some baser politician bawling at the hustings.

Do we think of him as a wrathful potentate in the skies—knit brows, flashing eyes, sweeping beard—swift to strike and ruthless in punishment, urging us to slay the unbeliever, rewarding us with an eternal polygamy? Then we are setting up an oriental despot as the image of God.

Not perhaps that, here in the West. But do we not sometimes still think of him as an oriental God of Vengeance, forgetting that Christ inculcated untiring gentleness and generosity by the very argument that God himself does not avenge? Then assuredly we shall forget Christ's lesson, and, attributing vengeance to God, shall ourselves become like that which we imagine God to be. We cannot love our enemies if we think that God is paying them out. Thus it is that high-minded men have become persecutors, because they thought they were the ministers of God's vengeance, and were acting not for themselves but for him. Thus it is that in these milder

days we are still insolent and cruel to those whom we think misguided or depraved.

Yes, we do still think of him sometimes as angry and brutal, as one who pampers his chosen janissaries and requires them to punish the unbeliever,—only, words of Christ float into our minds and make us mercifully inconsistent : we agree that God loves sinners, though we are sometimes not sure whether he loves heretics and unbelievers ; we know that he is merciful, though we are not sure that he will show his mercy upon all men ; we speak of his loving-kindness in one breath with his wrath,—at least in the pulpit, for it is significant that the anger of God is now seldom spoken of outside the walls of churches and of nurseries.

But again, do not many go to the opposite extreme and think of God as merely good-natured ? The average sensual man, who hunts for money, and lives for pleasure, and grumbles at the taxes, and is indifferent to the needs of others, who is careless of right or wrong, and customarily set against the light—he also has a fetish, whose scriptures and whose oracle are his favourite party paper. Our god may indeed be the idol we see in our own looking-glass, slightly touched up ; and we may worship our

prejudices, limitations, faults, and ignorances, setting up our own weakness on the altar of our private temple.

Do we think in yet another way of God, as the negation of all feeling, the absence of all personality, deprived not only of wrath, but also of power to love, an abstract perfection, a heartless infinity? The highest minds in the East have drifted in this direction; and some folk in the West are tempted to find a refuge in these chilly heights from the crudities which have so often defaced Christian theology, both Catholic and Protestant. But the personal values of men is unrecognised and the welfare of nations is unhelped by this dream-god; stagnation lies about his feet, his saintliest votaries achieve but the placidity of a divine despair, and his path is dogged with the reacting superstitions of gross idolatry.

Or are we content with what we call the 'knowledge' of material things, relegating all higher Reality to the sphere of agnosticism, and content to regard God as a Great Perhaps, or to deny him altogether? Then assuredly we shall find again that belief in the personality of God and belief in the personality of Man stand or fall together, as in Eastern pantheism

so in Western materialism ; where the one belief is indistinct the other will also be indistinct, 'the soul indolently ascribing to itself a merely phenonemal being' ; and where it is denied that God is a Spirit, the spirituality of Man will also be denied. Death chills the heart of those who set their faith on Doubt ; and the indifference to eternal things, or the denial of the supreme Spirit, among so many of the intellectuals in nineteenth-century Europe has already brought among that section of gifted writers a speedy bitter harvest of pessimism and desolation.

Or do we think of God in the common way as the author of disease and early death, as do those who wrest Christ's prayer "Thy will be done" into a meaning the opposite to his, and fill our churchyards with the text, ascribing to God a character which would make him the inferior of every real parent, of every true physician?[1] Do we think of him as one who

[1] This misreading of the Lord's Prayer seems to be general throughout Christendom. About it Fogazzaro finely says :—"Le parole '*Fiat voluntas tua*' che il comune dei fedeli intende soltanto come un atto di rassegnazione, e che implicano, invece, il dovere di lavorare con tutte le nostre forze per il prevalere della legge divina nel campo della libertà umana."—*Il Santo*, p. 116.

produces catastrophes and calamities—"acts of God,"—as one who hurts and harms us, and discards us, wreaks ghastly, wholesale vengeance, and rides upon the pestilence and the storm?

Or do we indeed think of God as our heavenly Father, as one who is altogether love and loveliness, all wisdom, all truth, all beauty, who is more tender than the sweetest mother, more just and merciful and strong than the wisest saint, a Person full of kindness and care, in whose infinite sympathy the lost sheep is known and understood, in whose omniscient solicitude the very hairs of our heads are numbered, and in whose benevolence there is place found for two sparrows that are sold for a farthing?

Is it really God whom we worship or believe in?

We are all to some extent tainted by idolatry. The ancient devil-worships which once darkened the heart of man have still their traces amongst us: the shadows cast upon the face of God by human pride and wrath have not been entirely dissolved; and sometimes they spread, to make a midnight in our minds, to blind whole sects or nations.

The revelation which Jesus made of God wins hardly into our hearts. "This is the message," wrote the greatest of his followers, "which we have heard from him, and now deliver to you—that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

CHAPTER 6

Futile Piety

ONE of the chief religious difficulties which men commonly feel is the moral inadequacy of many pious people. Why are the good no better? Why are ecclesiastical disputes so petty and implacable? Why are our divines not more divine, and our shepherds more pastoral? Why are so many earnest Christians selfish, cruel, narrow, or uncharitable? Questions like these have vexed men ever since they emerged from the cheerful immoralities of Polytheism, ever since they began to take religion virtuously. Putting aside a large margin of individual prejudice and exaggeration, the criticism is justified in the main: it is based upon an ultimate conviction of the goodness of God; and the world at large, though prone to judge a Church by the faults of its members, has been at the same time enthusiastic in its admiration for the real saints, and ready to

attach full value to their testimony. Yet the power of this criticism drives men from worship: most private irreligion is probably formed by the memory of some detestable pietist; most atheism has been bred of anti-clericalism, and anticlericalism has had abundant justification in facts.

Nor is it so much the black sheep of the Christian flock that are the difficulty. They are abnormal; and it is obvious that if a bad man is sufficiently unscrupulous, nothing can prevent him masquerading as a devotee or becoming a priest. It is the abundant grey sheep that shock the conscience of mankind. The average man (*securus judicat orbis terrarum*) notices, perhaps, that his parson is quite as average as himself; or perhaps he is disgusted with the bitter and voluble pettiness of certain neighbours who are assiduous in frequenting the church; or he studies the records of the episcopate, and judges that in the last century they generally used their influence on the wrong side; or in some countries he finds clericalism employing political means which he would hardly use himself—holding low ideals, and being habitually on the side of reaction, (now Boulangist, now Antidreyfusard,) and

blind to the signs of the times; or, may be, he sees convents of men and women, occupied exclusively in the service of God, and yet producing a type of dull unspirituality veneered by a multitude of puny observances. Small men get their impression perhaps from one unpleasant and orthodox relation; bigger men have studied a more representative world, but often with a like conclusion. How repellent as a rule are the devout women, or the priests, or pastors, who flit across the stories of the novelists of modern Germany, how conventional are those of France and England, or the little functionaries of the Church in the pages even of great Christian writers like Dostoievsky. The impression abides almost everywhere, and we all know that it is abundantly justified. The very best people are religious; but to be much occupied in religious observances often produces a character that is not good.

That is the crux. The man who professes to worship 'under the blue dome of heaven' does honestly not see that the 'oncers' are better than such 'blue-domers' as himself; nor that the 'twicers' are better than the oncers, nor the 'dailies' (may we say?) better than the twicers, nor the inmates of convents

better than those who pray but twice a day. We do indeed know that there are countless people who have vastly improved their characters by worshipping God more often: we utterly distrust the blue-dome theory of worship, partly because it is seldom more than a pretext, partly because it neglects beautiful and exalting things, and partly because it is unsocial; but we know also that it is possible for a man to worship more often and become worse, that he may garnish himself with churchgoing and grow more devilish than he was before.

And we find the explanation of the difficulty, as of our other difficulties, in Jesus Christ. He was as uncompromising as any modern novelist on the inadequacy—nay, on the wickedness of religious observancers; he was as urgent against the official priesthood as any anticlerical could desire. For the evil was established, flourishing, and much respected in his day. Now the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the Priests had no ruling interest in life but their religion as they conceived it: the Pharisees especially were men whom we should not have thought of calling hypocrites; devoted to their faith, they gave up their lives to religious observances, whole-heartedly, sincerely;

they combined in their persons our clericalisms, vaticanisms, puritanisms, our observances of Sundays, worship-hours, and all the rites and rules of a religion most conscientiously carried out. Surely these were men who really cared about religion, who put God before all else?

And our Lord, who was so gentle with notorious reprobates, and so mild under hideous provocation, described these sincere and devoted pietists as the offspring of vipers, denounced these blameless loyal churchmen as whited sepulchres, taunted these convert-seeking enthusiasts with the remark that they made a proselyte twofold more a son of Gehenna than themselves; and (most strange of all) recognized their authority to teach, and yet laughed at them as blind guides. He did not attack their office, as modern anticlericals do; he had no bigotry against the *soutane*, no use for words like 'sacerdotalism': "The Scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." But he is quite clear that their lives of religious devotion are a mistake, and have only made them evil.

They have devoted their whole lives to religion at the sacrifice of everything else; but

to what sort of religion? They have worshipped continually; but what have they worshipped? What sort of a god is it to whom they have given themselves?—surely a hard, unloving god, wrought not out of wood or stone, but from the evil stuff of their own minds, a glorified Pharisee their god, narrowly ecclesiastical and narrowly nationalist, a god well satisfied with the undeviating orthodoxy of tradition, and the scrupulous observance of fast and holy-day, and the customary ethical code, and the regulated duties of religion—a petty and pedantic god, very easily shocked.

That was the sin of the Pharisees. They worshipped the wrong god. All their evil, which made them the antichrists of their day, came from that.

In other words, they had a completely wrong idea about the character of God: not about his nature; for they knew that he is an infinite and eternal Spirit, almighty and omniscient. They even thought they knew that he is holy and righteous; but their holiness was the ceremonial kind of holiness, and their righteousness was only the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. They wrongly imagined the mind of God; and therefore the

being they devoted their lives to was not God at all, but the phantom of their own brain. They were the originators of that 'Cacotheist' Monotheism, which is the modern form of Idolatry, that spiritual image-worship, which is right about the nature of God and wrong about his character.

Christ had no doubt about them. He was brilliantly clear about the evil. He had no regard for their Monotheism, since they were wrong about the very heart of God. Indeed it is remarkable that he is nowhere recorded to have said anything about the material idolatry which was dominant in many places where he taught (though, according to the Fourth Gospel, he definitely looked to the time when all localized worship should have passed away, and the Father should be worshipped with true spiritual adoration): there is much about such idolatry in the writings of his followers, as there is in those of his forerunners; but he seems unconcerned about the danger which has so much occupied succeeding generations of Christians. He is so concerned with teaching mankind, once and for all, the true character of the Father. He has no word of warning against the worship of images, or demigods, or saints,

but only against the orthodox Monotheists who worshipped a god that was no better than themselves. He swept them away ; and in so doing he taught us for all time to be frank and vehement about the errors of devout persons.

The question to-day, as then, is—What sort of god do we worship ? Is our god to be a reflection of man, or is man to be a reflection of God ?

The need to-day, as then, is that man should know God, should know him as he really is, should have the impress of his character. It is not ever easy to know God, because the observance of forms, however conscientious, does not give us this knowledge. Only the pure in heart can have it, just as only the unsullied mirror can truly reflect a human face, as only the unclouded retina can convey to our spirits the impression of any object at all. Seeing depends on being. In order to know God at all, there must be some blandness of soul, some justice of desire, some simplicity of motive, some honesty of thought, some freedom from base passions and bitter thoughts, and certain translucency of the spiritual lens—*purity of heart.*

In order to begin with real religion at all,

some such purity will be needed ; and a man's knowledge will be in proportion to the degree of this power of vision. The bigot, who sets out with an eye clouded with prejudice and scorn and hate, will never make a beginning at all, though he fast every day, and give all that he possesses, or spend his life in a cell. Such is the explanation of the apparent paradox which puzzles religious people and delights the enemies of religion.

The fact that a man honestly makes religion the chief occupation of his life is no security that he will be a good man, or that his opinions will be of any value : his life and his opinions may be more harmful than those of the common criminal. For if his life is devoted to the worship of a false god, then the more religious he is the worse he will be.

Everybody would accept this in a case of crude idolatry. If the curate took to worshipping a crocodile, the congregation would not say, 'Never mind. The dear man spends so many hours upon his knees before the sacred monster, that we are sure he *must* be a very holy man.' They would rather say, 'The more time he gives to this abominable cult, the more idiotic and detestable he will be.'

But what if the curate worships an imagined god who is a spirit with the heart of a crocodile? Some curates have, and many very eminent people: indeed it may be questioned whether the crocodile is not morally superior to the deity whom Johannes Agricola worshipped. Or if our curate, eschewing the altars of the Church, were to address all his prayers to the chairman of his County Council? The chairman probably belongs to a higher moral order than the deity of some religions. And what of the real cases that actually do occur—that priest who has never harboured a heretical thought or indulged a bodily passion, but who is sullen, harsh, and stupid; that complacent layman, a golden pillar of his church, who oppresses his employees and treats as liars and knaves all whose opinions are opposed to his own; that *dévote* who frequents the altar, pours venom upon her friends, and makes life miserable for those who cannot escape from her? The types abound, in various degrees of grey or black; but they are not an argument against the worship of God. They only show how deadly it is to worship a false god—a god who is given the mind of a vulture, a bull, or a reptile. What does it

matter that the bodily semblance is no longer given to our false gods, if the mind and heart of evil creatures is still set up and worshipped ? The more idolatrous such people are, the worse they will be.

And our Master Christ was perfectly clear about all this. It was among devotees that he found the worst men ; he never questioned the sincerity of their creed, he only denied that they had anything to do with the heavenly Father ; he did not find the heart of evil in the indifferent, paralysing though their want of faith was to him ; he drew great goodness out of the simple, materialistic religion of the peasant folk ; he was not troubled by the pagans and image-worshippers, but by those who made a profession of orthodox religion.

He showed no sign of sharing our dread of formal heresy. He really seems to have been remarkably indifferent about what we call theology ; and certainly he left his followers to work out their problems with little assistance from him. Every book of the New Testament shows this : the disciples have nothing to build upon but their intense love of him, their conviction that he had revealed the perfect love of the Father and had fulfilled all previous

intimations of God's care for the world, their certainty that he had conquered evil and death, and was an abiding inspiration in their hearts. The earliest Christian writings, those of St. Paul, are based upon the person of Christ, and do not argue from any teaching of his; they might have written if the sayings of Christ had been almost altogether lost. Our Lord wrote nothing, and the only words which he is recorded to have taught his disciples are those of the Lord's Prayer. He did not formulate or legislate: he revealed. He not only took a line different from that of his predecessors, but it was a line also which, through successive generations, his own followers in the schools of Christendom have been incapable of taking. Indeed the great controversies have been so baffling and acute, just because he had laid down no guidance on matters which seem to us essential. Men searched the Scriptures for some clear pronouncement on such subjects as the nature of Christ, his union with the Father, the Trinity, the nature of man and sin, the Eucharist, the ministry of the Church, the authority of the Church or of the Pope; and they found nothing that could settle their disputes. Our

Lord could hardly have attributed even to such great problems as these the urgency which we are apt to assume; he must at least have felt that theology was better left open, that thought would develop, that mistakes would come and go, and that the stream of truth would continue, would broaden, and grow deeper.

His orthodoxy was an orthodoxy of the heart. He was not indifferent about that. He cared passionately that his disciples should be preserved from the one fundamental heresy, the heresy that makes God to seem evil. He thundered against those who had a bad religion of the heart; and showed that such men did not know the Father, and therefore did not worship him, and therefore that the more they practised their evil religion, the more evil they became.

So it was the Pharisees whom he denounced, the men who were most anxious lest the Church should be compromised by any departure from the deposit of faith; it was to the correct and authority-loving Chief Priests and Elders that he said boldly, the tax-farmers and harlots would go into the kingdom of God before them. Yet he did not at all say that they

were wrong because they were ecclesiastics, or that right would necessarily be with the free-lances; there is no sign in him of the Whig idea that a Luther or a Prynne must be always on the side of good, and a Bonner or a Laud on the side of evil: he is too far above the atmosphere of human controversies for that. He is in fact concerned about the future, not for the danger from priests but for the danger from teachers, from prophet-craft rather than priest-craft. Many false prophets shall arise, he says, and even false Christs; and he warns his hearers on another occasion to beware of these prophets, using here also that extreme language which he never utters except against heresy of the heart; they are ravening wolves, wolves in sheep's clothing, and he will cast them out as workers of iniquity. It is not the profession that is at fault, it is not a whole class as a class that is to blame, nor is there virtue in any outward vocation; prophets may lead astray as well as priests, unorthodoxy does not save men from the sins of the orthodox. It is all so true! France overthrew her priests and kings to find a worse Pharisee in Robespierre and a worse despot in Napoleon. Portugal, as I write, is groaning

under the persecution of a Republic, which has swept away those classes in whose destruction the Liberal hoped to find salvation, only to set up a Pharisaism of irreligion, an inquisition of atheism.

Since, then, there is no short cut to find those who are Christians inwardly, and whose orthodoxy is that of the heart, no wholesale elimination of the tares by the destruction of a class (which might remove a Saul of Tarsus along with the other Pharisees), we realize that Jesus Christ was supremely and for all time right in his treatment of this problem. The Prophets were, they also, to be known by their fruits. If they showed themselves by bringing forth good fruit to be good men, worshipping the good God, then they would have something to say about him that is worth listening to. It is no criterion that they use the language of religious tradition, or that they prophesy in Christ's Name, or even do mighty works in that Name. They can only be known by their fruits—not by their saying "Lord, Lord," but by their doing the will of the Father who is in heaven.

That is the only test. If a man worships the good God, he will do good deeds, if a man

really has communion with a mighty Power of goodness, infinitely stronger than himself, he must to some extent be influenced by that stronger than he. He may have been brought up (as most of us perhaps were) in some narrow legalism or other, in formal notions of the Bible or the Church; he may have been led to think that salvation is a thing of forms and phrases; he may have followed in youthful enthusiasm some party too threadbare and petty for the mighty heart of God; but, assuredly, if he has sought communion with the true God, whom to discover Christ has made possible for every man, his thoughts will have become more beautiful and true, his deeds more pure, and serviceable, and just, and all his life will have broadened along the way of a strong wisdom, and a bold and happy charity.

To serve a false god, a mere reflection of his own selfishness, or weakness, or his bitterness or legalism, will not help him, however conscientious that service may be. To double or quadruple his devotions will but increase his crop of thorns and thistles; for no man can make evil good by following it more assiduously and meditating upon it more

frequently. It was surely because the mistake is so terribly easy, because earnest men so often miss the magic of the heart, and seek to order their lives by law without love, that Christ prayed with such passionate desire that his children should know God as the Father, and, loving him as perfect love, should also love one another.

CHAPTER 7

Vicious Circles

RELIGION, like science, works in a circle: the right quality brings the right knowledge, the right knowledge brings the right quality. False religion turns in a vicious circle; true religion in a virtuous one. More accurately we may say that true religion rises in a spiral.

Religious controversies, for instance, have been so deeply scarred by *Hate* because of the uncharity of religious people. This uncharity prevented them from realizing the true character of God: they did not worship Love. In so far as they were uncharitable, they did not know God, because their hearts were not pure. But if they had worshipped God as he is, they would not have been uncharitable, and their hearts would have been pure; and in so far as they did worship the true God, their natural uncharity was actually lessened. It has in fact gradually decreased during the

Christian era, because the Christian Scriptures have been all the while driving into men's hearts the difficult conception that God is Love. And because uncharity has so much decreased, we are able now much better to realize that God is Love—to worship, in fact, the true God, and not some other and imaginary being.

I need not here try to prove the fact that Christendom in the past has behaved in an amazingly unchristian manner ; that the schism between the East and West was caused by the barbarous hate and childish ill-temper of patriarchs and bishops ; that the schism in the West between North and South, at the Reformation, was caused by great cruelty and wickedness on both sides ; that the schism between Anglicans and Nonconformists in seventeenth-century England was due also to hate and persecution, milder, but still abominably bitter. The Church has in fact divided and subdivided under the influence of gross uncharity. A melancholy set of volumes would be required for the *dossier* of Christian hate. Yet the record would provide a great encouragement; for it would show that the natural barbarity of man has in fact considerably

decreased under the influence of the Spirit of Christ; it would throw into a brighter relief our modern way of dealing with religious controversies. Certainly the Church of the twentieth century would not have created the divisions under which it suffers: had the controversies of East and West, or the Reformation, arisen for the first time to-day, strenuous efforts would be made by those in authority (and even by many of the protagonists themselves) to understand one another's position, to avoid irritation, by the most studious care in the expression of difficulties, to seek every means of reconciliation. We bear our legacy of schism; but our temper at the present time is far less schismatic than the temper of Christendom has ever been before, and our methods are the opposite to those of our forefathers.

And the record of Christian hate has also this value, that it proves the Christian revelation to be not from man but from God. If anything is established at all, this at least is certain, that man could never have invented a religion of love. Even the followers of Christ, whose devotion to him has been throughout strenuous and sincere, could not for century

after century grasp this religion, though it had been made for them, and set down in plain language by him whom they did passionately worship as infallible and divine. They certainly could not have invented the religion which they found impossible from the first to follow. Man is by nature a fighting animal, and his instinct is to fight in the name of peace, to persecute in the name of unity, and to kill in the name of love: his loyalties still express themselves in terms of war, and his heart beats to the throb of the drum. If Christ had not been divine, he could not have revealed the Gospel of love; if his Spirit had not continued to work in his Church, that Gospel could not have gradually dissolved the natural heart of man. For the best part of two thousand years the Christian peoples and nations made a business and a pleasure of fighting: trained and picked men, the leaders of religion, found the teaching of Christ so difficult to absorb that they honestly ignored it even in religious matters; and such a plain command as "Love one another," specially recorded in the Gospel as a new commandment, established as the test by which men should know the disciples of Christ, accepted by the Church, and vividly

enforced every Maundy Thursday by a touching ceremony, has yet needed centuries of reiteration before it could be taken as the working basis for any movement of real Christian fellowship, such, for instance, as those which are now springing up around us,—the Student Christian Movement, the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, the new Social Service unions and the religious fellowships which centre at Swanwick, the Council for Christian Witness, the International Social Christian Congress which meets for the first time this year at Basel, or the approaching World Conference on Faith and Order.

We are emerging from the circle of hate and into the spiral of love—from the circle wherein men believe God to be the god of war because they like fighting, and fight because they believe God to be the god of war—into the spiral of love, wherein men will be kindly affectioned one to another, because they have at last learned that God is the Father of Love, and will worship God as Love because they are learning to love one another.

We are only emerging. There are many difficulties before us. We are not yet worthy of the great opportunities which the modern

change of heart is presenting. Many will fail, and will rally back to the old fighting colours, familiar, war-stained, and romantic. Some will advance too rashly because they have not learnt the patience of true love. Few, perhaps, at first, will have a charity deep enough to find room at once for the prelate and the prophet, for the mass and the prayer-meeting, for all the contributions in their richness and variety which the Churches of modern Christendom have to make. But at least we have moved away from the old unquestioning satisfaction in a Church of uncharity, and we shall never return to it.

One may suggest other vicious circles wherein the world has moved. There is the circle of *Despotism*. Men regarded God as a tyrant because he is almighty—as rulers were generally tyrannical in proportion to their opportunities for tyranny. Yet God, by giving freedom to man, has in his love refused to act as an absolute monarch and has chosen to be a Father, actually needing the co-operation of man for his own Kingdom to be established. This is the Christian doctrine : the Moslem, on the other hand, thinks of Allah as the all-

powerful despot of the world, and therefore very logically denies human freedom, and his decadence is due to his belief in destiny. But as soon as one begins to think of God as entirely good, the Moslem position breaks down ; for if Allah were a good as well as an almighty despot, then men would be good, which they are not. The only result of the theory is at once to make men ruthlessly despotic and to paralyse them with fatalism.

Monotheism alone cannot save the world : neither could it in the days of Christ, when the Pharisees, who regarded Jahweh as essentially the Lawgiver to Israel, had fallen into the curse of legalism. As against that, Christ set the doctrine that God is the Father ; and for all time the only possible explanation of evil is that God is on the side of freedom because he is the Father. As good parents give their son liberty for his own sake, and send him out to school and college and business, where he may be led into evil as well as trained into good, so the perfect Father gives man his measure of freedom, because it is better to be free to sin than to be forced to serve, better to be a man than an automaton. We are not slaves but sons, and therefore we can rebel ;

but therefore also we can cry "Abba, Father!" because, as St. Paul said, God sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts.

Nevertheless, Christians find it still difficult not to be under the law. The primitive terrors of custom and taboo, the ancient confusion of right with ritual, the blind devices for propitiating some blood-stained fetish—such things survive in emotions which have not yet been driven from the dark corners of our minds. When a great theological dispute arises, and passion begins to creep into men's hearts, the old instincts surge up, the sorcerer and the medicine-man take possession of quiet gentlemen in long coats, the air grows full of threatenings and cries for force, multitudes find themselves panting with the excitement of a heresy-hunt. They hardly know why. As such attempts to suppress thought fail nowadays, for want of the death-power, the hunters may come in after years to look back, and to ask themselves why it was they were once so moved against a Maurice, a Colenso, a Bishop Temple. They do not know: it was because the old gods still had a place in their hearts that they were ready to call for fire to come down from heaven and consume their adver-

saries, and they did not know what spirit they were of.

So it is also when we are confronted with a problem of ecclesiastical order. There are at such times two principles to be considered, that of charity and that of law: both are important; but the difficulties which keep Christians asunder would be solved, if we could all escape from the circle of despotism, and believe that charity is the more important of the two. Our decision will in the main depend upon where we lay the stress—upon the ministry which is a matter of authority, or upon the fellowship which is a matter of love. We should have had few difficulties if we had always believed first in the holy catholic Church, and realized that bishops were made for man and not man for bishops, and that the ministry exists for the Church, and not the Church because of the ministry: but it has not been so in the past; and therefore the treatises on the Church at the present day are still in reality treatises upon the ministry; and feeling runs so high that, when confronted with some delicate question of Christian reunion, multitudes sacrifice the principle of charity upon the altar of law, without a thought that only by

a general recognition of the supremacy of love can the problems of rule and authority be solved. And yet Christ, in whose name we quarrel, was indifferent as to how his Church should be officered (except that he desired that his Apostles should not have lordship like the kings of the Gentiles, and that no man should be called rabbi, or father, or master), and left his disciples to experiment freely, with apostles, prophets, teachers, healers, presbyters, deacons, as in fact they did, without any thought of that 'divinely appointed order' about which controversialists have so much to say. Christ, so far as we can discover, laid his divine emphasis upon the fact that the Church is his body, with the negative proviso that it is to be without lordship, and the positive command that its members are to love one another.

If all Christians worshipping a Father and not a despot, had laid the same stress upon love, had died to the law, and lived in the liberty of sons, episcopacy would always have been the source of strength and brotherhood, and would never have become a rock upon which the ark of God was split. For indeed it is true that our Lord conceived a society

that should be a living organism ; his pictures are of a household, a husbandry, or a state, with its functions and officers ; his indifference to the form of the ministry was not an indifference to organic structure in itself : and it is true also that from the first century the episcopal order stood for the universal ministry, the catholic ministry, with which the whole body was identified ; and that the bishop represented not a mere separate community within the Church, but the relationship also of the local community with the whole body. All this is true, and much forgotten by our British public at the present day : but it would never have come to be thus ignored, if it had not been previously for so long a time stressed and distorted at the expense of fellowship and freedom, and even to the denial that grace can flow down along other ways. The true supporters of episcopacy are surely those who refuse to make it unintelligible to modern thought by using it as the obstacle to fellowship between Christians.

We are always tempted by legalism, in great things and small, because we think God is pleased by it. To seek goodness by rules and to estimate it by observance, is our common

fault. It used to be thought a priestly fault, till some communities got rid of priests, and had it just the same. Countless books of devotion in all the Churches reveal the true reason for this legalism. No earthly father would be pleased by his child calling himself a worm, or approaching him with terror, and with cries to appease his wrath and evoke his latent sense of pity; but many still find it natural to address our heavenly Father in terms which would not have been inappropriate at the court of Nero.

Akin to the Circle of Despotism is the Circle of *Cruelty*, as to which it may be said that the most appalling problem in life is the extent to which man can torment his fellow-man. We keep such things from us, because they are almost intolerable to the imagination; but they exist still, and they drift into our knowledge sometimes, from the Congo, the Putumayo, from Mongolia, Morocco, Bokhara, things unspeakable deliberately done. That degenerate criminals or undeveloped savages should delight in dealing out torture is terrible enough, that gross heathens should be devilish is not unintelligible; for we can understand

that a man will be cruel who looks upon some hideous grinning monster as his god—the highest ideal before which he bows for help : but the amazing thing is that judges as well as criminals have systematically inflicted torture, that cultured statesmen have dealt fiendishly with their victims, that some monotheists have been as cruel as the heathen, that Christian nations have at certain periods been hardly less cruel.

Ruthless egoism has been so profoundly established in the human heart through tens of thousands of years of naked war with nature, that even the pupils in the school of Christ have been slow to free their conception of goodness and of God from malevolence. It has never been easy to put off the old man, and to put on the new—"a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering . . . and above all these things charity"—seeing that the old man is very old indeed, is the neolithic, nay, the palaeolithic man in our hearts. Men have in sooth found it difficult to think of cruelty as wrong at all. This, which is to us the worst of all sins because the spirit of Christ has at last so far sunk into the general mind, was in former

times accepted or tolerated universally, only a few Christ-like figures like St. Francis of Assisi standing out conspicuous by their freedom from every trace of it. No doubt there has been progress throughout the Christian era: the fact that the Vindictive Psalms were felt as a difficulty in almost every age, by itself shows that the spirit has been at work. Yet the progress was slow: it is significant that, in the common ethical teaching of the Middle Ages, though anger was included among the Seven Deadly Sins, cruelty was not, though cruelty is worst when cold-blooded—nor is it included in the more primitive ethical teaching of the Decalogue. The persecutors of the sixteenth century, it is hardly too much to say, carried out their bloody work without contravening the accepted precepts of contemporary religion; and though a strong reaction of horror arose and remained, yet many barbarities and inhumanities continued also. At length in our time most Christian nations have emerged into the light, though the old phraseology still lurks in the Churches, and the larger part of Christendom still allows its declarations of faith to be entangled with anathemas.

There is but one explanation that a Christian can give for the share of Christendom in cruelty. The men who did such things, devout as they often were, expended their devotion upon a wrong object : the Inquisitors may have worshipped the god of Torquemada and Philip II, but they cannot have worshipped the God of Christ ; the society that tolerated our prisons, before the reforms of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, may have worshipped the glorified anger of early Judaism, or the crowned caprice of Calvin, or the distant dummy of the contemporary Deism ; but Howard and Elizabeth Fry worshipped the true God, revealed by One who said, 'I was in prison, and ye visited me.' The others, after all, were idolators ; though they had only a supreme and single deity.

Many are perturbed lest the essential truths of Christianity should be lost at the present day : they have sometimes been driven by their fear to act as if they could make a thing true by saying that it is true, and commanding that no one should say anything else. They have been afraid where no fear was. For indeed, though a spirit of denial does dominate

some minds, yet has our Master never ruled in men's hearts, and lived in us, as he lives and reigns to-day. Criticism may have changed our way of seeing the four pictures of him that have come down to us ; but the very fact that the Church presented nothing more complete, should remind us that the first Christians thought so little about the biography because, like St. Paul, they believed so intensely in the present reality of Christ and his intimate inspiration ; they were slow in collecting exact records of his human life, because they cared so much more for his glorified life. And to-day, all over the world, men and women are feeling that inspiration anew. Their faith depends less upon the past, and is not based upon what their fathers have told them ; but it is based upon what Christ is telling them now. To those who dwell, and rightly dwell, upon tradition, the danger of loss may seem to be great ; but we cannot estimate what is loss and what is gain : already, beliefs which appeared all-important to our grandfathers have to us become burdens too great to be borne ; and we know that truth alone can be gain, and that truth can never be lost.

The general public hangs loosely by Christian

theology and is largely indifferent to the ordinances of the Churches; but with the exception of a few crude reactionaries like the disciples of Nietzsche, the people of Europe and America believe very firmly in the Christian ideal. It may be that the general instinct is right; and that the world-wide forward movement of Christianity, whose current we already feel about our feet, will make plain the fact that the ministers of the Churches have in many things lagged behind the ideal of Christ. Yet how greatly have they already changed! Have they not in quite recent years abandoned largely the idea that God can be cruel, and changed the religion of fear into a religion almost of love? One illustration of this will suffice (passing over such obvious instances as that of the eternal burning):—The Holy Communion, which was instituted as the common act of divine and human fellowship, and the regular feeding of the soul, has within our own lifetime become again among devout Christians a matter of weekly and even daily reception. For centuries upon centuries the laity had shrunk from partaking, for fear of incurring the wrath of God, of eating and drinking their own 'damnation': in East and West alike, the

barest minimum obtained—once a year, at Easter, was the general mediaeval practice with us; and when, at the English Reformation, the minimum was raised to thrice a year and services without communicants were forbidden, the Communion came to be hardly celebrated at all. Nothing could illustrate in a more genuine and intimate way the fact that the love of a Father had been lost in the fear of an Avenger. This has now completely changed in the Churches of the West: during the last fifty years the Early Service on Sunday, with its many communicants, has become the most characteristic feature of the Anglican Churches; daily acts of Communion are increasing among Anglicans, and the practice of daily Communion has been urged upon Roman Catholics by Pope Pius X within the last decade.

Christendom has changed. Although sincere and able men still exist who rail at the change, and charge the modern world with sentimentalism; yet they none the less join in repudiating the barbarities done of old time by men who falsely bore the name of Christ. The old opinions were clearly heresies against the central doctrine of the whole Church. We

have all become merciful as men never were before, because no educated person now believes in a god who can be irritable or cruel. But we have not yet emerged altogether from the Vicious Circles, because many still believe in a god who is callous and careless, and who cannot therefore be Love. Our treatment of criminals, though it improves every year, is still (in contradiction to a saying of Christ) based upon the idea that the 'punishment' should be roughly equivalent to the size of the offence, which is the idea of the *lex talionis*. Our tolerance of preventable disease, accidents, drunkenness, prostitution, of piteous misery, pain, darkness, and degradation, is still extraordinarily hard to remove; the indifference to human suffering on the part of those who preach religion, and of those who listen to them, and even of those whose whole life is spent among the fallen or the destitute, is on the whole still strangely harsh. Positive cruelty has been lessened everywhere, and in some Christian countries almost abandoned; but the complacent negative callousness of moral insensibility is too often attributed to God for society as a whole to come under the inspiration of his infinite tenderness, or to feel the passion

of his healing and redeeming love. Many indeed have come under that power, and mighty works are being done by them in the crusade against evil. They are the true Christians, and worship no false gods; for the God they serve is kind.

CHAPTER 8

Christ and the Grim Images

JESUS CHRIST taught the world that God is personal love, and by his own life showed with the clearness of Midsummer daylight what he meant by this.

Men have been dazzled by the light ever since. They are dazzled still. They cannot believe that God is really as anxious for the welfare of his children as an average decent earthly father. The dirt of the pit from which we were digged is still too thick upon us. Some admixture of cruelty, or at least of harshness, some degree of unconcern, of insensibility to human misery, men still are convinced, must be in the character of God.

Even Christian men could not altogether rise to the simple conception of God's fatherhood as it was taught by our Lord. Even Christ's immediate followers did not always rest consistently in it. There is much in the last, apocalyptic book of the New Testament

which is inconsistent with the four other books that bear the name of John. And in that golden-phrased Epistle to the Hebrews, about which also the Church hesitated for long before admitting it to her Bible, there is an instructive example of the difficulty men have had in realizing the full import of Fatherhood. The unknown writer takes the flogging father as his type of paternal love, supports his conception by quoting a pre-Christian text from his own wisdom-literature, and then ascribes the miseries caused by human persecution to the chastening of the Lord, and adduces it as an evidence of the divine fatherhood. We could not have a more instructive example: the writer argues in such evident good faith, he has never imagined a father who did not scourge his children; "for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?" he says, and assumes that the tortures which the martyrs endured are a sign of God's love, because freedom from chastisement would be a sign that God had overlooked his children. Yet the thought of God chastising his children is absent from the Gospels: it occurs only here, and in the Apocalypse, and once in St. Paul. No scourge is placed by Jesus in

the hand of God: it is he who submits to scourging at the hand of men; the chief priests and scribes, he says, will deliver him to the Gentiles to be scourged, his own Apostles too will be delivered up to councils and the synagogues, and be scourged; but he himself has no use for the knotted cord except to drive the sheep and oxen out of the temple. Jewish tradition had pictured the Messiah as coming with a scourge to punish evil-doers: artists and the Authorized Version have thus interpreted St. John's account of the cleansing of the Temple; but we are only told in the text that he drove out the cattle,[1] we are only told by the evangelists that he himself was the scourged of evil-doers, and not the scourger.

There is nothing of any other kind in the Gospels, except the glow of his immaculate displeasure against the bigots and oppressors —a passion so unlike our common anger that we hardly dare call it by that name. All that we read of him bears the same impress of inflexible courage and overpowering strength, clement with the delicacy of gentle affection.

[1] John 2. 15, Καὶ ποιήσας φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων πάντας ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὰ τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας: "So he plaited a whip of rushes, and drove all—both sheep and bullocks—out of the Temple." (Weymouth's Trans.)

Christian teachers have indeed been often very ready to misunderstand his metaphors; as when his forecast of dissensions, "I came not to cast peace but a sword," has been twisted from its context, and used as if it enunciated a doctrine impossible to him, who would not let his servants fight because his kingdom was not of this world. They have thought of our Lord as one who never smiled, and thus have missed the irony in such a phrase as "For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good, but me ye have not always," and have applied it as a solemn prophecy of perpetual pauperism, to the discomfort of social reformers. Christian tradition has indeed been sometimes extraordinarily obtuse in this respect, as when the Mediaeval Church of the West built its theory of the universal twin powers, the Empire and the Papacy, upon the words "Here are two swords," and his reply, "It is enough!" which is equivalent to our colloquial "That's enough!" — in other words, "Don't talk nonsense!" The disciples themselves had on this occasion been convicted of want of humour, though surely a sad smile must have crossed his face when he said "He that

hath no sword, let him sell his cloak and buy one."

The Gospels tell us from beginning to end of an affectionate man, vivid and sociable in his talk, with the signs of humour even in those fragmentary and condensed reports of his sayings which have been preserved; of a man who used no violence, but in the patience and meekness of his sublime courage submitted to persecution, and himself showed the sincerity, as he vindicated the power, of his own doctrine of non-resistance. He rebuked the Sons of Thunder when they would call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritan peasants; he rebuked Peter for taking the sword, and healed the wound which Peter had made; he would not ask the help of angelic legions, but gave himself to his captives. His whole position is summed up in those short pregnant words of the Fourth Gospel, "Else would my servants fight." He is everywhere pictured as enduring violence and suffering wrongfully, never as inflicting grief, but as comforting it, never as causing pain, but as curing it.

People had thought that God drove men with thunder and with fire. Christ came as the Good Shepherd, to lead them, and to

guard them with his own life. People had thought that God afflicted them in his wrath with misery and disaster. Christ came as the Good Physician. The Father whom he revealed does not make wounds, but heals them. The new ideal of Divinity that he sets up is of one who graciously blesses, tenderly heals, and freely forgives; one who feeds multitudes, turns water into wine, cures every kind of sickness, consorts with outcasts, is gracious to fallen women, goes about doing good. Little children cling to him; and he dies in gentleness, still making friends, still anxious to allay the sorrows and to relieve the needs of others, and breathing out forgiveness where it seemed least deserved.

Christianity is different from other religions because it reveals a different God.

The Greeks had thought of a magnificent God, the Jews had grown from the idea of a strong and jealous God to that of a righteous God, Islam has worshipped an Emperor, Buddhism an Idea; but the best have never grasped the conception of a Father who could love as Jesus Christ could love, whose tenderness is more than maternal, like the tenderness of the Son of Man.

No man ever spake as this man spake, with that sure boldness of his. He who could leave men breathless with the statement that to see him was to see the Father, could also say, "Go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." He made no mystery of his astoundingly simple message: he left the majesty of God to take care of itself (as it can, so long as men live under the stars), and devoted his life to making his disciples believe in the tenderness of God, showing them that the circle of infinity is a family circle.

That loving followers of Jesus should have associated the idea of scourging with perfect fatherhood, shows indeed that even this great title needed the interpretation of his whole life and teaching, and the subsequent leading of the Spirit, before it could win its pure significance. Only in our own day is the flogging father becoming obsolete, because we are learning that discipline should be gentle as well as firm, and that its object is neither to wreak vengeance nor to cause misery, but to train and encourage. Yes! our Lord saw that it was not the power and majesty of God that men found difficult to understand, but his

compassion. When he used rich men and lords for his parables, he described them as they were in his day ; but when he told the story of a father, he pictured one who threw his dignity to the winds because he was moved with compassion for the worthless son, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him much, and was fondly generous, and was merry with him, and even argued gently and affectionately with that intolerable elder son. Christ never speaks of fatherhood, or of the heavenly Father, except as the expression of such utter love as this ; and when he compares the divine fatherhood with our human parental virtues, he does not suggest that if we in our wisdom chastise our children, how much more will God chastise us —but he says that if human parents, bad as they are, give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.

We are so prone to interpret the teaching of our Lord by that of his followers ; yet, even a St. Paul comes short of his divine Master—and who felt this more keenly than St. Paul himself ? Christians have even tried to explain that teaching by the history of the Old Testament, and have made room for the

slaughter of Jericho, in their conception of the evangelical Father. If only they had been content to interpret the writings of Christ's disciples in all ages by the mind of their Master, correcting all by his example, and filling up all imperfections from the fullness of his image—correcting Christians by Christ—how different would our Christianity be!

We must not indeed underestimate the severe side of Christ's own teaching, his sayings about the Gehenna of fire, judgement, and eternal death. But even here we have to realize what our Lord actually is reported to have said, and thus to clear his teaching from those exaggerated elements which have made the whole notion of "damnation" incredible to modern ears. The picture we form of "hell" is partly coloured by Mediaeval mystery plays and the traditions of Mediaeval art, partly by a host of writers extending over many centuries, partly by our use of words such as "hell," "everlasting," and "damnation," which are not true equivalents of the Greek; and partly also by the added touches in some New Testament writings, especially in those which have the most doubtful place in

the Canon, such as that in the so-called 2nd Epistle of Peter — that "God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus, and committed them to pits of darkness"; or in Jude "the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever"; or such passages in the Apocalypse as—"he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb," or—"the devil . . . was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." In estimating the words of Christ's teaching about judgement we have to remember this significant fact, that his followers tended from the first to exaggerate as well as to materialize it: the Matthaean formula "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," which is clearly a favourite phrase of the writer's own, does considerably alter the tone of Christ's words as given in Matt. 8. 12 and 13. 42; and even in St. Mark we see the hand of the scribe at work in the solemn threefold repetition of the phrase about the worm dying not, a phrase which in the best MSS. occurs only once. In the same way, the words "dam-

nation" (six times) and "damned" (once) have disappeared from the Gospels in the Revised Version: "ye shall receive greater damnation" goes into the margin of Matt. 23, and becomes "these shall receive greater condemnation" in Mark and Luke.[1] In the same chapter of Matthew, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell" becomes "How shall ye escape the judgement of hell (Gr. Gehenna)." The passage in Mark 3 about blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, "is in danger of eternal damnation," becomes "is guilty of an eternal sin," κρίσεως going into the margin; and the one saying in St. Mark which is really incompatible with the teaching of Christ, "he that believeth not shall be damned," belongs to that later ending which was added after the original ending had been lost. The last text, from the Fourth Gospel (John 5. 28), stands indeed, but "the resurrection of damnation" is changed to the very different and entirely

[1] The "damnation" of the A.V. is sometimes κρίσις (judgement as a process, judging), translated "judgement" in the R.V., and sometimes κρῖμα (judgement as a result), translated "condemnation" in the R.V. Mark 12. 40 and Luke 20. 47 (κρῖμα) therefore really mean "the heavier judgement"; and Matt. 23. 33, "the judging of Gehenna"; and John 5. 29, "the resurrection of judging."

Christ-like sentence, "and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgement." We are accustomed thus to see the warnings of Christ through the medium of writers who from early days have added what they thought were wholesome, heightening touches. But we must get back to something like his real words, which are clear and uncompromising, but also reasonable and wise—vivid allegorical pictures of the result of a selfish and unsocial life, in the stories of Dives, and of the Sheep and the Goats; and warnings of a spiritual Gehenna, where, as in the actual valley of that name, the fire burns continually to destroy the refuse and corruption. Certainly this is true: in this life evil is burnt up and smoulders away, and every one is "salted with fire," and the good lives on, and grows; bad men, bad families, shrivel away and disappear; selfishness and sin and folly bring the flames of misery upon society, and yet those very flames are agents in reform: in the next world too it is inconceivable that wicked men should pass into a happiness unrealized and undeserved,—there too a Gehenna must be found; and our only hope can be that there too the fire may burn out the evil and leave the good to endure and

grow, so that every one through the boundless power of God may in the end be salted with fire. The warnings of Christ are poignant, just, and true. If we do evil and are evil, terrible results must follow, in this world and the world to come.

Only, they are warnings. They are not descriptions of God's character; they are warnings of the inevitable evils which result from our being untrue to God's character. When a physician tells us that a certain course of life must result in some terrible disease, we do not accuse him of being harsh or cruel; we thank him for his care and kindness. It is certain that sin brings misery even in this world; it is certain that an evil character, though not outside God's love, as it is often outside the love of man, yet cannot assimilate or enjoy that eternal love. Such eternal loss is the most terrible thing which a thoughtful mind can conceive. It is not the work of the heavenly Father, but is the direct thwarting of his will; and the crowning evidence of the love of Christ is that he told men of that grim perdition in vivid and enduring parable. He came to seek and to save those that are lost, because he knew what that loss is; he bore

our sins upon the Cross because he understood, as we can never understand, their consequences.

There is no suggestion in the Gospels that our Lord inflicted pain in punishment for sin, or that God inflicts it. When Jesus was asked the question in the case of the tower that fell and killed people, he repudiated the idea. That sin causes misery he taught indeed; and in the Parables of Dives and of the Sheep and Goats, he taught that if selfishness does not bring misery in this world, it brings it in the next. Yet he did not acquiesce in this result, but went about forgiving sins, and was anxious that even his executioners should not bear the consequences of their act. He no more spoke of himself or of his Father as responsible for inflicting punishment than a doctor regards himself as responsible for inflicting disease: he prevented it wherever he could. When the evil in men's wills would not allow him to save them from sin and its consequences, he did the best he could for them: he warned them of the woe they were bringing upon themselves, whether that misery was to be torment in the next world, such as the rich man awoke to in the Parable, or torment in

this world such as he foresaw was coming upon Jerusalem.

He revealed the character of the Father in healing sin whenever his way was not stopped by pride, and in healing disease whenever his way was not blocked by unbelief; and he did this, not by wrath nor by punishment, but by love and grace.

There remained still the problems of evil. There remained the men who love darkness rather than light. But he had vindicated the character of God; he had shown that, wherever men will let God have his way, there is health and life and joy. He had not tried to explain evil, except by showing that the source of evil is in personal wills, human or discarnate; but he had shown that it was not of God, and he had triumphed over it openly.

There are, however, not a few good men still among us, who resent that belief in God's entire loving-kindness which is so markedly growing in the world at large to-day. "I am delighted with ——'s emphatic repudiation of modern sentimentalism as the worst enemy of Christianity," says a theologian deservedly esteemed, in words that have just been published as I

write: "The religion of Christ is a stern, austere creed, which sentimentalists, if they understood it, would call 'horribly cruel.' The distinctive symbol of Christianity, as he reminds us, is an instrument of torture." The eminent layman whose expressions were thus so warmly approved had written these words, among others:—

"It is assumed, though not perhaps usually said in so many words, that it must be the will of God that every one should be happy in this present world; and that true happiness depends not on any inward spiritual peace, but upon the circumstances of life. . . . But it is not too much to say that the mental position thus expressed is in direct antagonism to a fundamental characteristic of Christianity. Christianity is a religion, the distinctive symbol of which is an instrument of torture. The ideal foretold in prophecy, and actually manifested in the person of our Lord, is that of 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' No Christian deserves the name who does not recognize that he may be called to endure suffering which is limited only by the capacities of human nature; and that so to be called is in truth the highest of honours, the note that

he is summoned to walk in the very footsteps of his Master."

The writer concludes that "we are not fighting against a single error, we are resisting an apostasy." I do not give his name, because I do not wish even to appear to enter into a personal controversy with one whose character I so much respect; and also because I think he would allow me to quote these words not merely as his own view, but as typical of a common religious position. It is finely expressed; and with some of it we all must agree, especially with the spirit of the concluding sentence; for it is true, a thousand times true, that we must be prepared for suffering, and ready to try and endure it with the gentleness and courage of our Master.

But where in the teaching of Christ is there a word of justification for the idea that such suffering is the will of God? It is significant and characteristic that the only evidence here offered for the idea is a sentence from Deutero-Isaiah; and that we are asked to accept, as a true portrait of Christ, a few words from a poem written nearly five centuries and a half before he came into the world, and written as an idealized description of the Jewish nation.

No doubt many painters and writers have made the same assumption before; the African Church at one period insisted on representing the Christ as ugly, because of another phrase from the same chapter, "he hath no form or comeliness." But thus to gloss the Gospels by other documents, and to change their meaning, is no longer a possible form of scholarship, and is an offence against evangelical Christianity. To the credit, however, of the great Nameless Prophet it should be remembered that the whole magnificent passage (Isa. 49–55) is one long paean of joy and triumph. The passage does not give a picture of Jesus Christ,—though the real meaning of the Hebrew, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with sickness," has a beautiful application to one who went about sympathizing with sorrow and healing sickness,—but it does describe the idealized Jewish Church, "the Servant of Jahweh," as one who, at first misunderstood and persecuted, would fight his way through, and would triumph over pain and sorrow; and it presents the vision of a Millenium of happiness—"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem," "How beautiful upon the moun-

tains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation. . . . Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem." It is strange, is it not? that the only authority given to show that it is *not* "the will of God that every one should be happy in this present world," should be from this rapturous description of an earthly Millenium.

One is reminded of Voltaire's epigram upon the use made of another prophet—

> "Savez-vous pourquoi Jérémie
> A tant pleuré pendant sa vie?
> C'est qu'en prophète il prévoyait
> Qu'un jour Lefranc le traduirait."

But our Lord knew the prophets, and pointed out their significance. St. Luke tells us that he chose his text from the very same roll of Isaiah when he came back to his native city and preached his first sermon; and these were the words he read—

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

His comment on the text which he had selected was that "to-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." He preached in fact that it *is* the will of God that every one should be happy in this present world, more especially that the unhappy should be happy.

And is it not just here that his teaching is different from ours? We so habitually in our bottom thoughts assume that sorrow is the will of God *for other people*. We are prosperous and comfortable; and we console ourselves for the appalling pain and misery in the world by thinking that it is God's will. We use this philosophy to settle the affairs of others; we take it for granted that in our own specially favoured case (favoured, God knows why) his will is that we should have health and wealth, and we thank him for his special mercies to ourselves, we thank him that in the good things of this life we are not as other men are. Ah! in the cynical epigram of La Bruyère, "*Nous avons tous assez de force pour supporter les maux d'autrui.*" We preach contentment to the poor and to the afflicted, we suffer their

miseries to go on, slightly alleviated by the few crumbs that we can easily spare, and without valid protest or real effort on our part. Where are our good tidings? "It is God's will, we say." And so it is that time and again the very hedonists and materialists do God's true will, when professed Christians are content to leave things as they are; so it is that Christians as a whole have often left the most Christ-like reforms to be inaugurated by unbelievers. Because materialists did at least not believe there can be a God who is callous to human misery—since their opposition to current ideas about God at least saved them from that idolatry—therefore the cry of the poor which reaches the footstool of God reached them also, when the doors of the sacristy were shut against it. Such unbelievers have surely been among those whom our Lord described in the Parable. Astonished they will say, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

We know the answer. Our Lord judges us

by our compassion for precisely these material evils, want, sickness, affliction. If these things are indeed part of God's plan for the world, then we are to be cast out for not trying to thwart God's plan.

But he tells us that they are contrary to God's plan, that God's will is that we should destroy them. Where we are content with the material evils of others (sometimes in rare cases rising to the Stoic height of being indifferent to our own), he makes war against them; where so many of our most devout and orthodox teachers tell us that it is apostasy to think "that it must be the will of God that every one should be happy in this present world," he takes this very thought as the proof of his divine inspiration—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor," and to the miserable, and to the afflicted of this world.

Did he speak in metaphors? Then never did man give more literal interpretation to his metaphors than he. His working ministry was one long successful effort at relieving material misery, and at increasing material joy and comfort; his significant acts wrought nature to this end, from the first sign when he increased

the good cheer at a marriage feast, and through all his multitudinous works of healing, to the last when he got breakfast for his friends on that early morning by the sea-shore. His enemies called him a gluttonous man and a winebibber, and were doubtless honestly shocked at his solicitude for people's material comfort. They never guessed that those bearing his name, centuries after, would come to say that he did not wish everybody to be happy in this present world.

"The distinctive symbol of Christianity an instrument of torture"? Only if we remember that the cross is an instrument of torture from which every suggestion of torture has been removed. The history of Christian art is significant in this respect. In the Catacombs of Rome, filled as they were with the victims of persecution, pictures of martyrdom or death do not occur, and the pictures are scenes of healing and of sacramental comfort. Christ is represented as a curly-headed peasant youth of the Campagna, tending his flocks, the Beautiful Shepherd; he is even represented in five instances as Orpheus with his lute. The cross, which first appears in the 3rd century, is disguised as a fylfot, or in the stock of an

anchor : it was not till long after Constantine had abolished its use as 'an instrument of torture,' and all its painful associations had been forgotten by six generations, that it emerges undisguised at the end of the 5th century. The earliest actual crucifix is the little amulet at Monza, yet another century later ; but every suggestion of torture was absent from these first representations of Christ living and reigning from the Cross. By the 11th century the realistic crucifix was established in the East, but was resisted in the West, and was one of the subjects of dispute which ended in the first great division of Christendom. The 'instrument of torture' did at last make its way into the West also, not from any theological cause, but through the influence of Greek craftsmen ; and by the 13th century the older idealistic type was disappearing. Yet how idealistic still is the work of a devout painter like Fra Angelico in the 15th century! It was left to the secular artists in the pride of their anatomy to produce those tortured and defeated figures which give the lie to the central doctrine of Christianity—its triumph over sin and death. The history of the use of the cross is indeed the significant commentary on a gradual change

in the Christian spirit; from the age of those early Christians, who knew what it was to suffer for their faith, and could not endure the sight of a real cross,—to our own time, when, protected by anaesthetics and cushioned in motor-cars, we can bear to look out upon the miseries of the world outside, and to meet them with the assertion that our religion is symbolized in torture.

How different is Christ from the sophisticated pictures we have made of him, who call upon men to worship the mental image we have set up!

A man of sorrows? Only in the sense that he bore men's griefs and took away their sorrows. Weary he often was, saddened by men and persecuted; but everything we read of him shows that the glow of perfect health was included in the perfection of his humanity, and that his mind worked sanely in the sanity of his body. The Evangelists never attribute his sufferings or trials to himself, still less to his heavenly Father, but to man, and to those evil wills outside the human plane in which they found their chief explanation of the evil in the world. If they were wrong in this, as it has been the fashion to think, their error

at least saved them from the enormity of attributing diabolical characteristics to God. Perhaps they were right after all, and Jesus did not speak metaphorically when he said that it was Satan who had bound the infirm woman for eighteen years. Certainly he made it very clear that her infirmity was not the will of God. "He nowhere says that sickness is a beneficent infliction or that evil has a healthy use. No, he calls sickness, sickness, and health, health. All evil, all wretchedness is for him something dreadful; it is of the great Kingdom of Satan; but he feels the power of the Saviour within him."[1]

He suffered, but not under God. From his Father he had strength and cheerfulness, and that tranquillity which is so dominant in his life. He bore men's griefs, but not as a burden, for they melted away as he took them. He went about smiling and buoyant, or mothers would not have brought their little children to him; and very tender and bland, or the outcasts would have shunned him; not "stern and austere" certainly; and if the Christian creed has indeed become that, it has drifted away from him. He went about doing good, with

[1] A. Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (1900), p. 39.

a keen eye to human needs; for no one before him had been so deeply conscious of the appeal of misery. His works of healing—his fight against material evil—fill the Gospels; they are the very warp upon which the record of his life is woven. But even more significant is his care for the lesser material needs. "He was markedly sensitive," Mr. Glover notes in a noble and penetrating analysis of his character,[1] "to the idea of hunger": not only did this impress the Evangelists in the one miracle which all four relate, the feeding of the five thousand, and in the feeding of the four thousand which two of them add, in the turning of the water into wine, in the two draughts of fishes; but in his sayings also:—again and again he urged the feeding of the poor and afflicted, and he made it one of the conditions of being placed on his right hand; he suggested the payment of a day's wage for an hour's work, where only an hour's work was to be had for earning the food of the day; and he even reminded a too happy father that his daughter would be the better for a little food.

A man of sorrows? He was lapped round

[1] T. R. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (1909), p. 125.

with crowds whom he had made materially as well as spiritually happy—for no distinction would he make between sin and disease. "The circle by which he was surrounded was a circle of people who had been healed. They were healed because they had believed on him, that is, because they had gained health from his character and words. To know God meant a sound soul. This was the rock on which Jesus had rescued them from the shipwreck of life. They *knew* they were healed, just because they had recognized God as the *Father* in the Son. Henceforth they drew health and real life as from a never-failing stream." [1]

That was Christ's revelation of the Father. It was also his deliberate revelation of himself. John Baptist was disturbed in his prison at the material occupations of Jesus: when he heard of these 'works,' he sent to inquire whether Jesus was indeed he that should come. And the answer was a plain and triumphant vindication of this happy Gospel, with all its material blessings:

> "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind

[1] A. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity* (1908), vol. i, p. 102.

receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them."

To which our Lord added the significant remark, "And blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me."

A man of sorrows? Say rather the Fountain of human joy. His works were works of comfort, and he left a trail of happiness as he went along the roads; in his very Passion he was a material healer, and he shed material comfort from his Cross.

So he lived, and so he died, revealing the Father, showing the heart-beat of the Eternal. "The Father abiding in me doeth his works." His deeds were as eloquent words—sermons in action—and his words were like his deeds; they moved men strangely: to-day through the veil of many centuries, in the broken fragments that have been preserved of his speech, they move us still, and perhaps no less, for they are amazingly original and unfading. Their keenness perhaps most impresses us now; but even more at first they were felt as sweet and winning: men marvelled at their charm; "the parables of Jesus," says Mr. Glover,

"have a quality about them after all these years that leaves one certain he smiled as he spoke them."

And we have taken the smile out of them, and made ourselves funereal mouthpieces, droning at the lectern the words of his vivid and gracious speech. We have seen him "stern and austere," so stern that men have sometimes feared to come to him except through a mediatrix. Thus have we so often forgotten his mission and his message to those who profess to follow him, his command that like him his disciples are to go out proclaiming the kingdom and healing the afflicted, increasing material happiness wherever they go. What wonder, then, if we have sometimes also forgotten that in his sensitive care for human needs, in his urgent, unceasing desire that men should be happy and good in this world, he was revealing to the world what he meant when he said that our heavenly Father knows that we have need of these things. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?"

CHAPTER 9

The Christian Anthropomorphism

IF it be true that God is Love, and that his Word or expression among men is Light and Life, the negatives are also true—nothing that is not love is consonant with the nature of God, no darkness or death can be of him.

The glory of Christianity is that it proclaimed this truth, and in so doing swept away all the idolatries of the world, and sapped the foundations of all false ideas about the divine character. Christianity did this, but yet avoided the danger of conceiving God as a mere ocean of goodness. This eternal Love is a Person and not an abstraction ; and therefore his love for man is real, for it is a love between persons. Man is not a 'dewdrop,' destined to 'slip into the shining sea.' Man is a person ; and God is his heavenly Father, with more than all the love that the best human father and mother can have in the best parenthood, and his personality infinitely more actual and intense.

That is the message of Christianity which is unique among the religions and philosophies of the world. It avoids all base or imperfect ideas of God; and it avoids at the same time the tendency, so inherent in the higher theosophies, to think of him as something more than a person, which is really to think of him as less than a person, and as lacking something which the humblest savage possesses. God is Love, but this Love has been first conceived as a Father, as a Person in whom is all the care, and tenderness, and power which thrill us in the noblest human beings. All, and much more. But yet if we had only kept our idea of God up to the level of our best human ideals, how much heresy we should have escaped! There is no danger in anthropomorphism, if anthropomorphism means the thinking of God in the terms of *perfect* manhood: it will be good indeed for us if we think of him as no less. Anthropomorphism is only evil when our ideas of the true *anthropos* are evil.

Christianity is the revelation of the real character of God, because it is the religion of Christ. We cannot think of God as actual and real, we cannot think of him adequately at all, except in human terms. Therefore we

cannot have a right idea about God unless we first have a right idea about Man. However high above humanity God is, such transcendency does not concern us as a matter of religion. Our reason tells us that he must be infinite and eternal, and that he must in some way include all his creation ; but our reason cannot tell us *what* this involves. We are like fishes swimming round an island, and the only part of the island which they can understand is that part of it which is in their own element—with now and then a flying glimpse of the rest for those who can leap out of the water.

All we can know of God's character is what we can perceive from this human element of ours. We must be anthropomorphic, or we can at best have only a philosophy (a truncated philosophy at that) : we cannot have a religion. But the true *anthropos* is Jesus Christ. That is the secret of our faith. We *do* know what a true human being is like ; we do know what is perfectly human ; and therefore we are able to separate the ape and the tiger from the *man* in humanity : we are able to draw off the dregs which belong to our earthly evolution and to see the pure metal—the second man who is of Heaven.

St. Paul, a pre-Darwinian writer, surely gripped the truth which Darwinism has helped so much to make clear—that primitive man had the seed of future glory in him, that present man has the relics of past grossness in him—when in explaining the idea of resurrection, he said that "the first man Adam became a living animal; the last Adam is a life-giving spirit: but it is not what is spiritual that came first, but what is animal—what is spiritual came afterwards. The first man is a man of earth, earthy; the second man is from Heaven"; and therefore "as we have borne a resemblance to the earthy one, let us see to it that we also bear a resemblance to the heavenly One." [1]

But man, said the old theology, was made in the image of God. Did ever a truth flash into the ancient world more potent, more ennobling? It was a splendid hypothesis that was found to

[1] I follow Weymouth's translation of 1 Cor. 15, 45–59, which brings out the meaning of ψυχή and ψυχικός, better than the more literal rendering in the R.V. of "living soul" and "life-giving spirit." As we habitually misuse the word "soul," and unfortunately do not use the word "soulish" at all, we can only understand the argument by using "animal" for that immaterial part of us which we have in common with the beasts, our "soul," which is thus distinct alike from body and from spirit.

work ; but it could never be complete till the question was answered—"What sort of man, and what sort of God ?" Jesus Christ answered the question when he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

In doing so, he swept away the notion that frailties, jealousies, vices are (as we so constantly say) 'natural'—that it is human to err, and human to fail. Such disorders are natural only in the sense that they are carnal and common, vestigial products of evolution, not in the sense that they are true to perfect human nature, or conformable to the end for which we exist ; and because man is subject to these infirmities, he must be born again, must commence life afresh in a spiritual way. Christianity is the religion of a new birth, and that birth is the entry into our true human character. Real human nature, according to Christianity, is human nature without any admixture of sin, or stupidity, or disease. Our Master went through life without the taint of these evils ; he showed us the uncorrupted human nature, and in doing so he made good his appeal to the heart of man.

For there is this saving grace in us,—that though we do evil, we admire what is good, and

adore people for their excellencies : "we needs must love the highest when we see it." When we are shown a noble character, we do not call it inhuman ; but we have an intuition that it is true to the type, that it is pure, that it is manly or womanly, virile, humane ; and that, after all, the vices which we have so often condoned as 'only human nature,' are in reality impurities, inhumanities, and corruptions of the type. Stained as is the history of the past with cruelty and vice, blinded as we are to-day by our greed and folly, yet mankind has this which separates it from the beasts—that it realizes the failure, that it claims an inheritance in perfection, and can appreciate the humanity of Christ. We are justified because we can admire. The fact that there is a word for sin in our vocabularies is our glory and our hope ; for it shows that we judge ourselves by our true humanity, and that this humanity is not what we are but what we ought to be. In varying degrees men have looked upward to the type ; and when they began to hear of Jesus Christ, they said, "This is the type we have been looking for. This is the true Man."

So Christianity differs from other religions in that it began at the right end ; and this, may

be, is the truth about that eschatology of Jesus which we have lately heard so much discussed. It is not afraid of anthropomorphism: it shows us first "the proper Man"—*der rechte Mann*, in the words of the great German hymn—and it claims that this Man is not only all that men can ever wish to be, but that he is also all that God *is* in relation to this world. To know this pure Man is to know God: he is one with the divine Father, and to see him is to see the Father. And to those who ask, How? the Fourth Gospel answers, This Man is the perfect expression of the Father, his Word.

Men thought the claim audacious, blasphemous; and no wonder. But it has proved to be the final revelation of the divine character; it has never failed to work for truth and virtue in the heart of man; and in so far as man has been faithful to it, he has been marching out of barbarism, and has shared its glory. Men had held more or less debased views of God; now they could know the true God by knowing this true Man; and this is all we know and all we need to know. The claim of Christ was simple and bold, with a divine boldness, with a heavenly simplicity. God works like that every hour: the more we probe the mysteries of his

work in matter, the more its complexity converges into one law and one element; and the more we contemplate the greater mystery of man, the more we are content to say that every man is a word of God made flesh, a very imperfect expression—like a broken message on the telephone—but an expression none the less, with something divine about him because there is something human.

And the proper Man, who was seen as the express image of the Father's substance and the brightness of his glory, never tried to lessen the merely human side of his revelation, but spoke with a kind of heavenly familiarity about God and man, and treated the ineffable in homely fashion, as one who was at home in it. There is no straining after Divinity. It is simple, and borne simply, as a king may wear his robes. There is no shrinking from human lowliness. He is just the son of man; and though he is one with the heavenly Father, he is also one with his earthly brethren, and will not be without them; and they are to be grafted in him, and to be like him, and to be with him where he is; and he prays, "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." He is quite clear about

his identity with the Father, and says simply that from henceforth they know the Father and have seen him ; and yet he goes on to say that though his works bear witness of him, his followers shall do greater works. He is not afraid of glorifying man or of comparing our poor mortal incarnations with his own ; and so it was that the followers of the Son of man did not feel it incongruous to call themselves the sons of God, and to say that when he should appear they would be like him, for they would see him as he is.

Very bold was his claim, and he did not stop to explain it. He was content to declare his unity with the Father and man's unity with him. The Church soon began to puzzle over the problems he had raised ; for, being human, his followers had to try and think things out. They kept to his own phraseology of Father and Son and Spirit, and eventually settled down into a series of affirmations which asserted that each is divine, and that God is one, and that the nature of God is a mystery to the human understanding.

These affirmations seemed to converge in a paradox ; but the framers of orthodox theology

were not afraid of that; and they rejected all the denials and adjustments which had been put forward from time to time in order to simplify the conception of the one God. The Church preferred the more difficult course of acknowledging that God's personality was not simple at all. We may well be grateful for this, now that we are learning how very complex the personality even of man is, how very intricate is his pyschology. And the example of Islam has taught us that the mere assertion of God's oneness does not result in a sublime theology, just as Buddhism,[1] at the opposite extreme, has shown that the rejection of all personality as evil weakens our conception of the divine character by substituting an infinite abstraction for the God who loves us.

Many at the present day would be much helped if the Christian Creed had defined the Godhead as being Love, and Light, and Life. The Christian Creed would have remained true if this had been done: the Father *is* Love, the Son Light, and the Spirit Life; and those who find it easier to conceive of God in these terms

[1] The teaching of Gautama himself did not include a belief in God. The theistic developments of Buddhism came long after its founder's death.

would doubtless be right in using them ; they need not lessen their grasp of the Christian faith, but may well increase it. Centuries of the professional theologian have no doubt blunted the edge of theological terms ; and a superfluity of sermons has almost destroyed their meaning to ordinary folk. "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost" become hard and small to our minds ; and we forget the immense suggestiveness which these terms in truth possess. At the best, all words are inadequate, as those well knew who first used these, as indeed all Christian thinkers have realized—poor human symbols of divine realities ; but these have a quality which makes them better than any others (if we remember that they can convey no distinction of sex when used about God), that they are all terms applicable to human beings ; and that they thus convey to every mind the great principle that God is a Person—not less a person than man, but more.

And only if God is a Person can we think of him as Love. That love, Jesus Christ taught, is the love of an infinitely wise and good Father. The Christian Church has been true to her Master in proclaiming that, though

the conception has been always too lofty for her members fully to realize. The Fatherhood of God is to-day the one great religious idea which men all over the world who have any faith at all agree to accept. Many indeed resent the dogmas that lie behind it. But where would the conception be to-day without those dogmas—those affirmations which preserved it from impoverishment? What other religion has brought it in to the hearts of men? Has Mohammedanism, or Buddhism, or popular Hinduism, or Shintoism, or Confucianism? The best men of these religions are realizing it to-day; but they have learnt it from Jesus Christ, who taught us what God is by showing us Man.

Bold indeed was the teaching of Jesus, with the simplicity of extreme boldness, and its truth. He established for ever the principle that God is entirely wise, and tender, and good; he gave us a standard by his own example to show what he meant by such wisdom and love. He abolished the conception of God as a king—a powerful person, demanding homage, expecting gifts, devising tortures, and liable to fits of ill temper—which had been the general conception of a personal God

among the nations. He traversed the attempts to better this by mere cold theories of God as absolute power and excellence. He substituted the conception of God as a parent. The arms of God that rock the mountains are thrown round the neck of a prodigal. God and man become a family party. The central act of worship becomes a common meal; the gate of heaven is unhinged to be a breakfast-table. Heaven is a home.

He never shrank from being homely, yet the thought of God's holiness (which is the divinest kind of majesty) deepened in men's minds as he proclaimed the intimacy of God's love. To the quality of parental affection he added in his own person that of filial duty; so that in the divine character men could see also the adoring submission of perfect sonship, the sublime comradeship of perfect brotherhood—God not only creating and ruling, but God also coming forth to look for men, to seek, and knock, and ask, to humble himself, to be given into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the Cross.

Certainly no theology which demanded an absolute simplicity in the Divine Being could accommodate itself to such a conception as that.

Christendom *had* to explain it by acknowledging a great richness in the Divine Personality ; and it had to reconcile it with the final truth that there is one God by setting out the doctrine of the Tri-unity of persons. How else ? If God is less than all that Jesus Christ showed himself to be, or less than the strivings of the Spirit in men's hearts, then there must be sublimities in man that God lacks, and God must be less than a brother, husband, wife, son, or daughter, less than a seer in his love of truth, less than an artist in his love of beauty, less than a hero, a martyr, a good physician, priest, king, less even than a good shepherd.

The revelation of Christ, and its explanation in the long meditations of his followers, proclaim and preserve the boundless Love of God. That love becomes real, vital, and unfathomable, warm as the kiss of lovers, innocent as the kiss of children, a benediction like the kiss of a mother ; so winning that our hearts beat to it, yet so far above our thoughts that we have not yet dared to grasp it, and to believe that God is really for every human soul, and in all human life, our Father which is in heaven.

CHAPTER 10

The Cult of Disease

MANY who are emancipated from the belief in a grim god, and who would be horrified at the idea of worshipping a cruel god, do yet linger in the notion that our heavenly Father is the author of disease and the contriver of torment. It is a huge comfort, when we are vexed by sickness, to feel that our fate is still being shaped by God, to say 'It is God's visitation,' and we are often nerved to great endurance, and rewarded with some comfort, by thinking 'This is God's will.'

Yet by so thinking and so saying we lower the common estimate of God's character, we make him the author of corruption instead of the Giver of Life ; and it is precisely in order that such degradations of God's image in our hearts may cease, that we are told to pray that our Father's Name may be hallowed upon the earth as it is in heaven. The truth that enables religious men to make good use of sickness lies

not in our thinking that disease is God's will, but in our knowing it to be God's will that we should take our sickness bravely and sweetly, that spiritual health can triumph where bodily health fails, that spiritual excellence is even better than physical. And the truth that enables our spiritual force time after time to recover the body to health is the fact that it is God's will—not for men to have disease—but for them to have life and to have it abundantly.

While pious folk are trying to see the vials of disease in the hands of the Good Physician, the philosopher who writes in defence of Theism knows full well that he has got to clear the character of God from this imputation of evil. It is the atheist and the pessimist whom he has to overthrow ; and chief among their arguments are the horrors and apparent injustices of life —the earthquake and the storm, the volcano, the famine, and the plague, sweeping away with awful inexorability young and old, just and unjust. Where is now your God ? they say, your beneficent Almighty, your equitable Providence, that nevertheless cannot check the atrocious assassins and the odious parasites of nature, cannot prevent the slaughter of her recurrent disasters, the pain of her continuous

torture-chambers, the injustice, the misery, the baseness and cruelty, the disease and corruption? Atheism became common in modern times, because this is an argument of which the full force has been felt only in modern times. It is felt now imperiously because of our modern change of heart. The ancients were little troubled by it, because they were much more cruel. That living things, beasts or men, should be tormented and slain did not appear to them evil: it was indeed a favourite source of amusement. The earlier Jews, like primitive men all over the world, regarded God as specially manifested in the violence and convulsions of nature; they pictured bright angels coming forth from him, armed with famine and with pestilence.

But the evidences of ancient times have become the difficulties of the present day. The God in whom alone we can believe is the one only good God: with few exceptions our philosophers are agreed that Theism is in no other wise conceivable. The argument for God's goodness is to us the argument for his very existence as a Person, since a universal Force of mixed evil and good would be less than a person, and a bad Person would be less than the perfect God. Pietists may still try to

find room for disaster and disease within the character of God (and some may even think that evil is good because they suppose it to be of divine origin), but the philosopher defending the truth of Theism knows that to do this is to make the way easy for the atheist, and sets himself to show that these evils can be accounted for in some other way.

How do theistic writers set about their work? Ultimately all their arguments come back to one point—that the will of God is a universal state of goodness, health, and happiness, but that the laws which alone can produce this render exceptions to it inevitable;—that the earthquake, for instance, is a by-product of certain inherent principles of matter, without which the universe could not exist at all; that the possibility of pain is necessary to the preservation and development of life; that the possibility of sin is the inevitable condition of human freedom; and that disease is to be attributed to the same cause, since (as biologists now assure us) disease is not found among those animals which are entirely free from human interference.[1]

[1] See e.g. Ray Lankester, *The Kingdom of Man* (1907), p. 33. If this generalization is exact, one of the chief diffi-

Now it is remarkable that Jesus Christ always acted upon exactly the same principle. Disaster and disease, sorrow and sin, are, he always assumes, contrary to the will of God: he came to conquer them within the sphere of his earthly influence; he sent out his disciples to fight for a universal triumph, till, as St. Paul saw, Christ should put all enemies under his feet.

Stress is often laid upon the fact that our Lord was brought up a member of the Jewish Church, and was loyal to that Church, and accepted its Scriptures. That is true, and one of our chief needs to-day is that men should recover the lost virtue of loyalty, should be faithful to the particular Church in which God has placed them, and patriotic about the Christendom to which they owe all that they are. But Christ's loyalty brings into still greater relief the fact that his mind was untrammelled—not only by the traditions—

culties of earlier apologists is removed: James Martineau, for instance, admitted, "I cannot deny that the phenomena of disease among the lower animals are perplexing facts, which at present admit of no satisfactory explanation" (*Study of Religion* (1888), vol. ii, p. 84). Martineau goes on to instance the diseases of cattle and grouse; but these we now know are certainly due to man.

but also by the written laws and principles of that Church ; and here surely he justifies that free thought of each successive generation, combined with loyalty to the ecclesiastical organism, which has been ineptly dubbed on the Continent as a heresy by the name of Modernism—ineptly, because each generation must be really modernist, since for the time it is modern, and because every wave of modernism brings truth as well as error, and ultimately clarifies and reinforces religion. Christ lived among a people that hung with more than Oriental tenacity upon tradition : yet, without any violence, he made all things new ; because he said what he knew to be true, and left the element of error in his predecessors to disappear under the solvent of his words. Thus he disposed of the *lex talionis*, thus of the chattel theory of divorce, and of all unequal views about the poor or about women ; thus he replaced in men's minds the conception of Jahweh loving Jacob and hating Esau by that of the Father loving all ; thus also, by teaching his disciples the duty of untiring forgiveness, he rendered obsolete the ancient notions of the vengeance of God.

And thus, in the matter now before us, our Saviour traversed the accepted belief that

disease is a visitation of the Almighty (as some five centuries before, the great thinker who wrote the Book of Job had protested against the orthodox view of his day, that disease and affliction are sent in punishment for sin, though without finding the solution) : Christ dispelled the terror which had belonged to the "hand of God"; and he disposed of the problem of pain in the one and only possible way. He went to the root of the matter. All disaster, disease, sorrow, and sin, he removed from the realm of God's volition. The fall of the tower in Siloam was not an act of divine vengeance upon specially wicked people ; the sicknesses he met at every turn were not acts of God, but of the devil. He relieved sorrow, and removed sin ; he appeared as the Light of the world, driving away these dark things ; and he never showed a trace of that inconsistency which is ours when we say that sickness is evil, but that it is sent by God for our good : the God whom he revealed cannot do evil that good may come.

And he made the problem of disease simple for all time by treating disease exactly as he treated sin. If we follow his example, we shall avoid the common errors and we shall never again think that sickness is God's will.

He stood throughout his ministry for the principle that sin and disease are both evil things, against which a good man must be continually at war. He himself went about fighting both with equal determination; and here he is different from the saints who have followed him: for they, though they have possessed and exercised healing powers, have treated them as a secondary matter, greatly subordinate to their spiritual work; whereas he "went about doing good and healing" with a sublime solicitude, never weighing his spiritual works against the material, always drawn to the side of the sorrowful, whatever the cause of their distress, always treating sorrow as evil and putting happiness in its place, using the same words to the sick woman and to the sinner woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." We call him indeed 'Our Saviour,' but we do not often remember that this great title means also 'Our Healer,' that he was indeed *Der Heiland*, for to him bodily and spiritual health were indistinguishably precious; and he was not content to say to a sick man, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' without saying also, 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk.' He moved about, enthronged with the sick, and

spreading health as the sunshine; the records of his life teem with the triumphs of his war against disease—the space given to these 'signs' might even seem disproportionately large, had it not been only too abundantly proved that the lesson of God's love is hard for men to learn, and that though they see signs and wonders they will not believe. Men have thought that black deities, such as Kali the Destroyer, are manifestations of the Supreme. Our Saviour was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil, the Destroyer, and he taught us that sickness, and sorrow, and sin are alike violations of the will of our Father who is in Heaven.

We must, then, treat sickness exactly as we treat sin. This will give us the answer to our questions. 'Is disease a visitation from God?' Only in the sense that sin can be called a visitation. 'But does not a good man often use sickness to make himself better, and is not sickness often a blessing in disguise?' Only as temptation is often a blessing in disguise, and a good man often uses a fall into sin as a stepping-stone to better things. 'But ought we not to be still thankful, and still believe ourselves within the sphere of God's love, when sickness smites our home? Must we lose this

comfort?' Yes, we ought to be thankful always; just as we are still in God's love if sin smites our home, or one falls greatly whom we have treasured: the comfort is to know that God did not will the evil. 'Ought we not, then, to be resigned when we are in sorrow or sickness?' Never: no more than we ought to be resigned when we are in sin.

'But how does disease happen, if it is not the will of God?' It happens as sin happens: God is the cause of disease only in the sense in which he is the cause of sin. Ultimately, as we have said, the existence of sin can only be reconciled with the existence of God (since a bad god is now unthinkable) on the ground of human freedom. That freedom may be more limited than is popularly supposed, but it exists. Sin exists because of free-will; and free-will exists because God is our Father, and has made us in his image. Sin therefore exists because God is love. But God is not the author of sin. To use an old illustration: a merchant is cheated by his chief cashier; he is not therefore the author of the crime, though he could have prevented it by substituting mechanism for free agency, by using automatic registers, and by locking up his money in a

strong room, instead of trusting the cashier to meet his claims and present his bills as they fell due. He could thus have prevented dishonesty, but he would have prevented honesty also. So God, because he is love, has given us the great trust of our human will—"Occupy till I come"; and because he is holy, has given us the opportunity of being moral, which we could not be if our actions were mechanical. Like the master in our illustration, or in the Parable of the Talents, God is the cause of character, but not the cause of the form which character takes. God is the cause of freedom, and freedom is the cause of sin; but God is not therefore the cause of sin, in any other sense than that he could have prevented the bad by withholding the good, as indeed a father could prevent his child doing wrong by battering his head and making him an idiot.

In no other sense is God the author of disease. And as a matter of fact, the more disease has been studied, during those recent decades when we have begun to know something about it, the more we are being brought to our Lord's point of view, and are compelled to regard it as inextricably mixed up with evil,

generally the result, direct or indirect, of sin—especially the sins of intemperance,—and in any case an abnormal phenomenon, peculiar, as it is said, to man and his dependents. There may, it is true, have been great microbic invasions in the past sweeping away the unfit; there has always been the struggle for existence, the death of the many, the survival of the few,—the death of the survivors themselves also but a little later, in the sad decline of faculties and the failing of power. But at least modern science has explained these things to us, has shown that the development of creation from the first specks of protoplasm had to come that way, that death has been the servant of life, that strength and beauty and grace and the human world of thought and goodness have sprung out of nature's battle-field. So far as natural science can see, there could have been no other way. And our Theism brings also the conviction that there can be no other way; that God has set himself the task of making matter out of that 'nothing' which we call the ether, and life out of matter, and animal souls out of mere life, and out of the dim instincts and the dawning reason of souls then individual spirits capable of all

virtue and loveliness ; and that the immense inconceivable work could only be done this way, with death for the tool,—not an evil tool, unless death be evil in itself, which it cannot be in the eyes of God, though it seems evil to us by a most necessary instinct of our souls.

God is the Author of health and happiness. The first Christians believed this : indeed they took it for granted. The people by whom Jesus Christ was surrounded were people who had been healed ; his mission was a double mission, to body and soul ; he "went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness" ; he sent out his twelve Apostles on the same double mission, "preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere" ; and his seventy Disciples had the same charge, "Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." The Early Church believed that health was one of the good things which a Christian possessed because he was a Christian ; St. Paul, so far from attributing to God the fact that some members of the Church of Corinth were 'weak and sickly, and

not a few sleep,' ascribed it to unworthy reception of the Eucharist ; and so far from calling his 'thorn in the flesh' an act of God, characterized it as 'a messenger of Satan.' And though the Church lost the belief that the absolute possession of health was its prerogative, it continued to believe that the power of restoring health belonged to it, and has never entirely lost that belief.

But how was it that the Church soon ceased to be a community of healthy persons ? How is it that so many good persons and so many saints have had notorious bad health, if it be true that God cannot be the giver of disease ?

The answer is, Because of idolatry, of mental idolatry as we have described it, and because of man's sin. Asceticism soon grew up : maceration, dirt, self-torture, began to be regarded as the chief way of holiness,—the most terrible things were done ; and the wonder is not that saints became ill, but that they lived at all, and as a matter of fact did often live to remarkable old age.[1] And asceticism has stained the life

[1] See, for instance, the remarkable contemporary account of the fourth-century hermits of Egypt in *The Paradise of the Holy Fathers*, translated from the Syriac by Dr. A. Wallis Budge.

of many saints down to modern times. It is not for us to blame men and women with whom we are not worthy to be compared ; but none the less it must be said that such saints wrongly accepted the ideas of their age, and that the asceticism which they thought it their duty to follow—and followed because they had the courage and conscience to do what they believed to be their duty—was as a matter of fact based upon false ideas about God. It came into the Church indeed from pagan sources, and was based upon the idea that in some way God was pleased with the physical pain of his children. It is without warrant in the Gospels : such a saying as " Let him deny himself and take up his cross " cannot be used to justify self-torture except by a violent wresting of its meaning, which is that a man who follows Christ is to put the holy cause before everything else, to sacrifice his own egoism, and to bear whatever pain the malice of the devil or man may wreak upon him.

Self-denial is one of the chiefest of Christian duties, the hidden cause of all enduring progress among Christians and of their triumph, the undying message of the Cross. Let us not be driven by any reaction against false ascetic-

ism, to forget the constant denial of selfish desires, both spiritual and physical, both great and small, subtle and exceptional or common and diurnal, which is required of us all. But this does not mean that we are to mar the perfection either of the spirit or of the body: it is self-indulgence which mars that perfection; and we are to deny ourselves, so that both we and the least of God's little ones may be his athletes, pure and strong, noble and of good service.

The illness thus of good people may be due to their accepting a false asceticism which crushes the healthy desires of the body and twists its functions,—to their accepting the idea that the spirit must be at war with the body, as the price by which heaven is to be attained. It may also be due, and in the past it often was due, to mere ignorance of hygiene and want of cleanliness.

The illness of good people may also be due to sin, to some constitutional weakness induced by their parents, or indeed to faults in their own past life. Most of all will it be due to the sins, negligences, and ignorances of their neighbours. We are learning nowadays to appreciate more the power of corporate evil,

and to estimate the psychology of crowds ; we realize increasingly how difficult it is even for the strongest nature to resist the spiritual infection of his age ; and in the material realm the discovery of the parasitical character of one disease after another has taught us in this also to understand the solidarity of human society.

> "A poor Irish Widow (Carlyle relates in *Past and Present*), her husband having died in one of the Lanes of Edinburgh, went forth with her three children, bare of all resource, to solicit help from the Charitable Establishments of that City. At this Charitable Establishment and then at that she was refused ; referred from one to the other, helped by none ;—till she had exhausted them all ; till her strength and heart failed her : she sank down in typhus-fever ; died, and infected her Lane with fever, so that 'seventeen other persons' died of fever there in consequence. The humane Physician asks thereupon, as with a heart too full for speaking, Would it not have been *economy* to help this poor Widow ? She took typhus-fever, and killed seventeen of you !—Very curious. The forlorn Irish Widow applies to her fellow-creatures, as if saying, 'Behold I am sinking, bare of help : ye must help me ! I am your sister, bone of your bone ; one God made us : ye must help me !' They answer, 'No, impossible ; thou art no sister of ours.' But she proves her sisterhood ; her typhus-fever kills *them* : they actually were her brothers, though denying it ! Had human creature ever to go lower for a proof ?"

The illness therefore of good people does

not show that their affliction comes from God, in any other sense but that in which sin may be said to come from God because he allows it. Good people are sometimes ill, but the goodness in them makes for health : it is the evil in them, and around them, which causes the failure of their bodies to conform to the will of God. Saints have suffered from the errors of their time, and have shared its diseases with its mistakes ; but if a perfectly good man lived in a perfectly good age, he would have perfect health.

And the cause of sickness is still evil, although a hero may cast health away in the service of others—as did Florence Nightingale, who was bedridden for fifty years (fifty most strenuous, useful years, indeed) after the Crimean War, because of the stupidity, callousness, selfishness, and greed of other folk. Hers was doubtless one of those exceptional cases in which such a sacrifice was justified by a splendid result. I doubt if it is often justified : we all have known admirable people whose lives of supreme usefulness have been cut down to a few years because they thought it right not to take any care of themselves ; and the world is much the poorer for the loss

of those who are spending long years on invalid couches, occupied perforce, it may be, in thinking constantly about themselves, and a burden to others, because they would not, in the days of their usefulness, give occasional thought to conforming their bodies with the laws of God.

Risks must indeed be taken sometimes, death must be faced if a higher duty overrides the duty of being well, torture or even the possibility of disease may be presented to a man with no alternative that a good man could accept. We may be called upon to cease being efficient and useful members of society, through some human Moloch or some blind conspiracy of natural laws ; and it is then God's will that we should bear the loss, though it was not sent by him, just as a good father would wish his son to prefer death to dishonour on some mission which the son had undertaken at the father's will. So a man may give up not his health only but his life for others, as in the supremest Sacrifice of all, which was made by One in the fullness of the health and strength of his perfect manhood—not because God is the author of the diabolic torture of crucifixion, but because men were too evil to receive his

Word—"whom *ye*," as St. Peter said, "by wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom *God* hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death."

The will of God, then, is health and happiness : not a sparrow falls to the ground outside the Father's care, said Christ, anticipating our modern humanitarianism, and we are of more value than many sparrows. The Holy Spirit is as certainly manifested in physical as in moral health, and disease is as ungodly as sin, for disease is the sin of the body as sin is the disease of the spirit. The Son of God came to heal men's bodies and spirits alike, and manifested his Father as the Author of health in every plane of human existence. God devised this marvellous machine, whereby we have touch with the world of matter, and he maintains it in the immeasurable intricacy of its perfection. It is man who puts it out of gear, substituting corruption for purity.

CHAPTER 11

Pain and Vengeance

IN its bearing on the divine character, the question of Pain is distinct from that of Disease, though in practice the two are much confused. Disease is wholly bad, a contravention of the Divine contriving. If it came from God, it would destroy his consistency, as a divine origin for sin would destroy God's consistency : and furthermore Christ's revelation of the divine Fatherhood makes it clear to us that if God inflicted disease as a punishment, he would be less good than a bad father ; for the worst father would not punish his children by deliberately infecting them with a horrible plague. The rational theist cannot admit the possibility of one single failure in the perfect goodness of God ; the Christian cannot accept the terrible explanation of pantheism—that worst of all heresies which still lies, heavy as death, over the fair land of India to-day—the hopeless heresy which attributes evil as well as

good to "God," which makes sin, folly, ugliness, disease as much a part of him as holiness, wisdom, beauty, and health.

But pain is different. We may attribute it to God without thereby assuming that God is cruel, since it may be kinder to send pain than to send pleasure. I do not think that the old pagan aphorism, *Dei omnia laboribus et doloribus venduni*, is a true generalization ; but it contains the truth that pain is sometimes the price for a higher good. Such pain is clearly compatible with the most perfect divine love ; and this chapter might now be brought to a close, since we are concerned with nothing else than the vindication of the divine character.

Only, the habits of human cruelty have so obscured our conceptions of God, that we cannot rest content with this simple statement, but are obliged to attempt the pursuance of the matter a little further, in the hope that it may be possible to relieve a few common misconceptions in a subject which even the simplest or the most careless man has to face, and perforce must try to explain to himself in some way or another.

It is a common habit to talk about pain as if it was always the will of God, and always (or

nearly always) a good thing, producing good results. Yet in practice we invariably act as if it were a bad thing. We wish only good to those we love ; yet we would do the utmost in our power to preserve them from pain. We fight against pain as if this struggle were one of the noblest forms of human effort. We talk one moment in general terms about the high and splendid uses of pain, and then we go to the dentist and request him to avoid the exposed nerve. We use narcotics and anaesthetics whenever medical science allows them ; and we should call the surgeon a brute or a fiend who causelessly operated without first producing the blessed insensibilty to pain. Nor is our inconsistency merely due to cowardice, for we gladly spend great sums to lessen pain for our friends, and also for the public at large in whom we have only a general human interest. Nay further, we habitually regard this horror of inflicting pain as one of the outstanding signs of our higher civilization ; we attribute the callousness if not the stoicism of the Red Indian to his barbarity ; we attribute to the same cause the indifference of our forefathers to the horrors that accumulated outside their city gates.

But we blow hot and cold. Which is right? Is pain good? Then we ought not to lessen it —nay, the torturer may be justified in increasing its extent. Is pain evil? Then we ought not to attribute it to God.

However we may theorize, we all show by our practice that in our hearts we regard pain as evil. Our dislike of inflicting it we regard as a sign of our escape from barbarism. But is there not a danger of our leaving God behind in the barbarism from which we have escaped? The conception of him which satisfied our forefathers—can it satisfy us? will it satisfy our still more tender-hearted descendants? If we feel it less and less right to cause others pain, is it right for God to cause it? The pagans took pleasure in witnessing slaughter and torment, the circus was the most popular amusement of the Romans, from the highest to the lowest; the fires of Smithfield and the gallows of Tyburn had their supporters among many of our own forefathers once, and the *auto de fé* was indeed an 'act of faith.' Yet to-day bull-fights seem to us a manifest blot upon the character of a brave nation. We regard such defects among Christians as a relic of paganism in their hearts. But clearly the pagan con-

ception of God could not be the same as ours : it was possible for the men of old time to think of God as complacently regarding the anguish of men—as once it had been possible for the brilliant Carthaginian heretic to think of the blessed as enjoying the torments of the damned. It is not possible for us—which is why our ideas about eternal punishment have so greatly changed. If God is obliged for our good to inflict pain, we are sure that he regards the necessity as evil, and we are sure that he must hate the task.

In fact we are growing out of the old savageries into some approximation to the mind of Christ. God, we see, must really be like a perfect and heavenly Father ; and no pain can be ascribed to him, except such as an entirely wise and loving father could give his son. But even in the old days, when a good man (according to his lights) would torture a criminal, he would not inflict any but superficial and soon forgotten pain upon his children ; and less and less do wise fathers inflict any except what is gentle and mental. We find that it is discipline and training which children need, and that the strongest education is that which is most free from violence, most tender

in its firmness. Our ideas of what God must be change with our ideas of what a father ought to be.

But, it may be said, does not God punish sin? does he not wreak vengeance and bring retribution? Surely not. Where is there any justification for this idea in the life or teaching of Christ? The Jews expected the Messiah to come with vengeance; but he came with pardon and healing, and the hands that should have taken the sword were nailed to the Cross. The power of Christ through the ages has been precisely that he did not wreak vengeance, though he warned men against the inevitable results of sin: he appealed to something deeper and holier and more hidden in the heart of man than the dread of retribution; and so he drew all men unto him—in repentance and not in fear, in tears, in the transformation of love.

It used to be thought that the terrible diseases which accompany prostitution were the divine vengeance upon sexual immorality. Who thinks so now? We know now that these diseases afflict innocent women and children more than the guilty, and as a form of punishment would be unworthy of the

clumsiest tyrant. And so it is with all the pains that follow wrong-doing. No one now proposes cynically to leave the pain as an appropriate punishment for the sin—to exclude drunkards, for instance, from medical aid. We have outgrown the ideas of vengeance. We attack the sin and its painful results at one and the same time.

And we find that we are more successful in this way. The old criminal system was retributive, and it was also a mint of criminals; our prisons are still crowded with recidivists, for, though our penal methods are steadily improving, we have not yet come into line with the scientific criminologists who tell us that the retributive idea of punishment, belonging, as Mr. Havelock Ellis says, to "an archaic group of animistic and other ideas which have long died out," is utterly futile as a practical tool for dealing with criminals in a civilized state. In fact the old idea of rewarding crime by the infliction of pain has been destroyed, and the criminologists of Europe and America agree that it has been destroyed. We are now experimenting in better methods; and institutions like Borstal have already proved that the young criminal at

least can be cured by making the gaoler into a sort of father, and the prison into a sort of home, where lads are taught, and encouraged, and rewarded, and trusted. In other countries, similar work has been done with adults. In all countries, except the most backward, men are giving up the idea that goodness can be produced by the infliction of pain. The patient investigations of the criminologists have destroyed that idea: in its place we have the ever growing use of discipline, and of training, and the appeal to the better part of a sinner's nature.

When, therefore, preachers speak about the vengeance of God and his terrible retributions upon the wicked, they are describing a being who is obsolete, they are not speaking about God at all. No wonder that many scientific inquirers have been atheists! in some neighbourhoods they would still have carefully to avoid listening to sermons, in order to prevent their faith being undermined.

But when religious people do talk like this, they are in fact ignoring the revelation of Christ. It was precisely in this connection that our Lord repudiated what was then the orthodox principle of vengeance, "Ye have

heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil : but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also . . . ." The exact opposite. St. Paul, indeed, urging the same principle, fell back upon the Jewish idea, and said that Christians were not to avenge themselves because "Vengeance belongeth unto me ; I will recompense, saith the Lord." But in thus ascribing vengeance to God, he was not following the thought of Christ, but was paraphrasing a passage in Leviticus. His practical application of Christ is admirable, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," and "Overcome evil with good" ; but the reason which he draws from his own Jewish traditions just throws into greater salience the fact that our Lord told people to be merciful—not because God will look after the vengeance —but because God is merciful too.

Here is all the difference. We are to avoid vengeance because God avoids it, to forgive because it is God-like to forgive, to do good because then we "shall be sons of the Most High, for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil." So far from God being revealed as the giver of pain, in punishment for evil, we are

told to give pleasure in return for evil precisely in order that we may be like God, with a family likeness to him. So it is put in St. Luke ; and the words related in St. Matthew are even more explicit : the old hatred of enemies is swept away on the ground that if we love them, we shall be "Sons of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." So far from God being regarded as a god of vengeance, his divine attribute is that he returns good for evil ; and instead of our being encouraged to reflect our own cruelty in our notions of God, we are told to reflect his kindness in our actions towards men. And thus, the passage concludes, the perfection of the heavenly Father is to be the pattern for human perfection.

CHAPTER 12

Pain and Punishment

IF vengeance, being both unwise and immoral, may not be attributed to God, is pain to be accounted for as a wise and loving form of punishment, apart altogether from the idea of retribution? Many who may be ready to admit that God does not chasten man for sin as an act of "justice" will yet assert that he chastens as an act of loving correction: pain, they will say, is a necessary part of our human discipline.

But certain difficulties arise. In the first place, we are much less sure than our ancestors were as to the value of physical pain in a disciplinary system. Torture we have discovered to be futile and wicked; and even light methods of castigation are fallen into discredit. We use whips for dogs and horses because they cannot understand other methods of argument; but even with beasts we find that the more high-bred they are, and the more

scientific our methods, the less is the whip employed. We inflict physical punishment less and less upon children; we have substituted devices for causing slight discomfort or passing sorrow; but even these we reduce, because we find that more solid results are obtained by appealing to a child's better nature. Precisely we find that this better nature is more surely reached, the more we can manage to avoid bodily castigation; and that the best disciplinarians make the least use of punishment. It would be strange if God had not known this all along. Punishments we still have to inflict in our public institutions, but how far already have we moved from Dr. Busby! or from the wholesale flogging by which the Duke of Wellington kept his army in order—it was an army of roughs, as he has told us very plainly. We retain in a greatly reduced degree certain forms of chastisement for dealing with the ruffians that are still found in our schools and in the service; but our discipline does not consist in these exceptional methods for dealing with exceptional cases; it consists in the respect for authority, the *esprit de corps*, the sense of loyalty, the common standard of duty and "form," the unquestioning obedience

in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, which are produced by the corporate life of these great organizations. The real discipline of an army or a school lies in its power of *preventing* misdeeds : its punishments are but records of its failures, and they are necessary in order to protect the law-abiding majority against the infection of those failures. Perhaps they would cease to be necessary at all, if the law-abiding majority itself was more than half-converted. Public spirit will greatly improve when our theology is better,—when, for instance, little children are no longer taught (as most children still are), by those who ought to know better, "If you do wrong, God won't love you any more."

All this is true also of society as a whole ; penal law does not exist to make people good, but to protect society as a whole from the attacks of abnormal and degenerate persons. So far from chastening the good with loving correction, we find that the good need reward, encouragement, the delegation of authority, and the sense of responsibility. And the wiser we become, the more we associate discipline with reward, the less with punishment : a method like that of the Boy

Scout Movement, which has no means of punishing, is producing remarkable results—is spreading the spirit of discipline among thousands of boys whom their fathers had failed to knock into shape by the summary methods of the working-class parent; it does this by appealing to what is best in the boys, their 'keenness,' their honour, their loyalty, their freely-given obedience. What should we think of the Scoutmasters if they acted in the way popularly ascribed to God—hurting and tormenting the boys, good and bad alike, but especially the best boys, in loving correction, for their good? Even in prisons the most reactionary governor believes in rewarding the better-conducted criminals, and does not punish them as a means of increasing their virtue—does not torment them *pour encourager les autres*.

If, then, much pain that was once accepted as punishment is now seen to be incompatible with the goodness of God, much also is incompatible with his wisdom. Not only is it as punishment manifestly unjust, falling (as the wrath of Oriental monarchs did) on the innocent as well as the guilty, and often falling clumsily and wide, striking the innocent and sparing the

wicked; but also it fails to produce reform and improvement. Chastisement is an unscientific form of discipline.

Religious people are slow at discovering this, because they are so immersed in Judaistic forms of expression; they address the Almighty as if he were alternately passionate and weak, unreasonably cruel and unreasonably kind, vacillating and inconsistent—slaying multitudes with the pestilence, and then remembering his mercy and saving the rest—pouring down snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest upon sinners, and needing to be reminded that there is another side to his nature, that he is none the less a merciful God, and can be persuaded to be favourable, sparing when we deserve punishment, and in his wrath thinking upon mercy. Such phrases as these, consecrated by centuries of Jewish and Christian usage, and difficult to give up, were the phrases addressed to Oriental despots, sincerely applied by the Prophets to Jahweh, though with increasing emphasis on his mercy. But they are mere rhetoric on Christian lips. They have no echo in the words of Jesus.

Christ treated sinners just as the most enlightened criminologist is learning to treat

them ; he forgave, encouraged, trusted them, and gave them health. He taught men to return good for evil because God returns good for evil ; he spoke of God, not as pouring down fire and brimstone upon sinners, but as causing the sun to rise and the rain to fall upon them equally with the good. He entirely discarded punishment from his methods, and told men that his methods were those of his Father. The power of Christ in the world lies precisely in this, that he draws men by love, and does not drive them by punishment : the magic of his saints has lain in their endeavour to do the same. To the same method we are being inexorably led by our experiments and discoveries in educational and disciplinary methods.

To the religious world in which Christ lived the idea of punishment, both retributive and disciplinary, was inextricably bound up with the idea of a righteous God. Surely it was a wonderful thing that he discarded the whole conception, and proclaimed a God who is entirely consistent, who has no moods and no variableness, but is always actively tender and beneficent to good and bad alike. Was ever a greater change more thoroughly made ?

We are not told of any discussion with his disciples on the subject of pain ; and it is difficult to consider his relation to the subject, apart from disease, which is the form in which he usually dealt with it. We have already seen that he relieved pain even in the milder forms of hunger ; we are sure that he never inflicted it ; he refused to have any force at all used on his behalf, rebuking Peter and the Sons of Thunder. Mental pain also he certainly relieved, revealing God always as the Comforter, and not as the tormentor. In fact he seems always to have treated sorrow, pain, and disease alike as evil.

Pain therefore that is due to sin and to disease is clearly not of God's sending, if sin and disease are contrary to his will, and vengeance and punishment are not among his methods. Pain that is due to physical disaster and the inexorability of natural law is also not in God's purpose. It is the result of God putting forth his power into the realm of finite things, and employing a power, thus limited, to innumerable ends, immensely complicated. We call the power thus employed in orderly sequence by the name of law ; and we can see enough to know that without natural

law the universe could not exist at all: Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation which causes a man to fall from a height and break his neck, is disastrous in that instance, but if it did not exist we should not be able to walk upon this planet at all; Newton's First Law of Motion which may cause a collision at sea, is the same law that makes the earth spin round the sun and be alive. We can see enough to say that God is good, that the possibility of catastrophies and miseries in life could not be removed, except at the price of causing far worse catastrophies or of destroying life altogether. God does not will them; but (to put aside other considerations for the moment) having limited his power by setting it to work in this finite universe, he cannot prevent the physical evils that are as the dross in that crucible wherein is produced the golden wonder of the world. His laws may thus be compared with our human use of machinery: we use it for good ends and for the increase of human happiness, although its use means the occurrence of thousands upon thousands of horrible accidents every year; we do not will these accidents, we spend indeed great sums of

money in fencing and inspecting machinery, in order to prevent them; and with improved care we hope to prevent them as far as possible: but they will still occur, and we shall not prevent them altogether, because this could only be done by giving up machinery altogether.

For the sake of simplicity we have assumed in the last paragraph that the disasters of this life are inevitable. But it is important to remember that the majority of them could and should be prevented, because they are caused by our carelessness and selfishness, or by our ignorance of natural law. "Acts of God," our forefathers called them, and the phrase still appears in legal documents, although we do not really think of our fire-brigades as hosts of ungodly men, warring against providence. We have in fact destroyed many of these "acts" during the last few decades. Centuries of wailing processions did not remove pestilence or famine; but we have abolished them,—not by saying "Lord, Lord," but by trying to do the will of our Father in heaven—by cleanliness, for instance, and by a little use of that perfect love which casts out fear, love of God, of his wisdom, his truth, his laws, love of and co-operation

with one another. For surely the scientist's disinterested love of truth in the service of humanity is one of the highest conceivable forms of charity. When, then, for the sake of argument we say that God cannot prevent certain physical evils, we really mean that he is calling upon us to be fellow-workers with him in preventing them as far as possible, and—who knows?—it may be one day in preventing them altogether, withstanding the earthquake, resisting the microbe, walking upon the sea, and even eliminating the blunders of our own machinery.

God, we are bound therefore to say, allows pain as he allows sin, not because it is good, but because, under certain conditions, it is a necessary evil. It is involved in the existence of that vast factory, the world. And the world is worth it. There could not be character without the choice between good and evil, the possibility, that is, of sin; there could not be life at all, and all the joy and beauty of the world, without the possibility of pain; there could not be happiness without at least the possibility, in some degree, of sorrow.

It is therefore only the possibility of pain, as

it is only the possibility of sin, which we can attribute to the direct will of God.

He has made us sensitive to suffering ; he has given us a marvellously complex nervous organism that resents physical injury with intense acuteness ; he has given us quick, tender, and brooding minds, deeply capable of sorrow.

But this is because of his great love. It is by virtue of this that we are human. In the lower ranks of life existence is more and more subconscious, and the capacity for suffering is greatly reduced; in the lowest it probably does not exist at all. Nature is not so cruel as she seems. "Pain," says J. Henri Fabre, "is a patent of nobility"; and if we say instead that the capacity for pain is a patent of nobility, we shall be recording a great truth. This increased capacity differentiates man from the lower animals ; the capacity is lowest in the savage, and it is still increasing with our intellectual refinement : sensitiveness is indeed a sign of civilization.

Clearly this delicate soul of ours, and the immensely complex nervous organism through which it feels and acts, were not given us in order to do us harm, or to hurt us. They are

ours for our good, and the joys we most value are due to them. The lower animals are capable of suffering, not because pain is good for them, but because their past evolution and their present strength and beauty and joy are due to their efforts to avoid pain. They feel the pangs of hunger, for instance, not because those pangs are a good discipline for them, but because it is essential that they should eat. So with us: the vedettes of pain upon the outposts of our organism are so acute because the whole garrison is so noble and the citadel so precious: their business is to warn and protect. When we are gashed, it hurts—not because it is good to be gashed, but in order that we may be prevented from chopping ourselves about.

We fear death when we are in health, not because death is really to be feared, nor because it will be fearful when it comes, but because God wills that we should keep alive.

> The sense of death is most in apprehension;
> And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,
> In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
> As when a giant dies.

So says Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure*; and though the beetle has probably never felt

pain in its life, the giant has, and most deaths are preceded by the suffering of heavy illness or of slow decay. But most men die unhealthily because they have lived unhealthily—have eaten and drunk, breathed and behaved so wantonly that the wonder is they are alive at all. Yet even so, all observation shows that, when the time comes, men die without sorrow: the fear passes away when the need for it is gone.

Such considerations as these are welcomed when they are offered as a contribution to religious apologetics, and those who write treatises on the existence of God account for the miseries of natural life in some such way as this. But religious writers have often failed to observe that if their defence of theism be true, as it is, then we have no right to speak of God as inflicting pain. He has endowed our nerve fibrils with the power of conducting intensely unpleasant sensations to the brain, precisely in order that we may avoid incurring these sensations.

There is of course a moral limit to that avoidance. It is wrong to be cowardly. And because it is wrong for man to be cowardly, we habitually make a confusion in our thought

and argue that it is right for God to hurt us. But God does not hurt us; he only gives us the noble power of accepting anguish rather than fail in our duty, of disregarding the prophylactic use of pain for the sake of motives that belong to a higher plane of his order: courage is like miracles—indeed, it is a miracle—the overruling of a lower law by a higher. But in all miracles the lower law remains none the less an essential part of God's order, and necessary to the existence of the world. So it is with courage: we overrule our abhorrence of pain, but none the less that abhorrence is absolutely essential to our existence.

We confuse our thought, but we make no confusion in practice. A soldier takes cover as much as he can, but at the call of duty he dashes into the storm of bullets; a fireman uses all precautions to avoid being burnt, but he will risk his life in the flames to rescue a victim. We know perfectly well that we ought not to chop our fingers off; but we hope we should contrive the miracle of courage if we had to choose between mutilation and the shirking of duty. It is only savages who make any confusion in practice, and in spite

of the divine warnings of pain inflict mutilation upon themselves, bearing henceforth the marks of disfigurement as a record that they have disobeyed the natural laws of God. In the civilized world, to make this confusion is an accepted sign of insanity. So sure are we that self-mutilation is an evil; just as we are sure that the voluntary endurance of mutilation may be necessary to avoid a worse evil.

It is true that some minor forms of self-injury are still in some quarters exonerated among us; but this is only because society has not yet become entirely logical. We have at least learnt to regard them as rash, or morbid, and as unbalanced acts not far removed from the degree of mental instability. They are relics of the barbaric instinct which have not quite disappeared. It is in fact, as we have already observed, a principle of the civilized world to prevent pain wherever it can be beneficially and honourably prevented: although we know that without sensitiveness to pain neither the civilized nor any other tolerable world could have come into existence; and although we know also that without the readiness to encounter suffering

for the sake of duty, and to endure it bravely, patiently—and with such inward strength that we can even overcome it—we cannot be worthy of our faith or true to the spiritual possibilities of our manhood.

CHAPTER 13

Sorrow and Joy

IF God is not the author of physical pain, is it none the less true that he is the author of sorrow, of that mental agony which, to the higher types of humanity, is the worse of the two evils? Here the problem is less contentious, because it is a universally accepted principle of Christianity that God turns sorrow into joy and that happiness is the reward of a good life: even when God is thought of as the tormentor—at least outside hell—his inflictions are yet considered to have some ultimate happiness in view; and though religious people have often impressed the world as being gloomy and depressed, we are all agreed that in this respect there must have been something wrong with their religion. Even the most ardent worshippers of pain have yet firmly believed that the very touch of God brings comfort, that he helps his servants in their afflictions, and rewards them

even in this world with a transcending bliss, that he wipes away all tears from their eyes, and leads them towards a state whence sorrow and sighing shall have fled away. There may have been much inconsistency here, but it was an inconsistency that saved us from paganism : we have in truth advanced as far along the way of Christ as we have already come, because (even at the cost of logic, and in spite of ourselves) we have held to some belief in the good and loving God whom he revealed, and have felt that whatever grief a true Father could inflict must be but a passing stage on the way to happiness.

The problem is different, because the goodness of God is not involved. A father who tortured an erring child with a view to his reformation would be a fool ; a father who did it for the sake of retribution, or to indulge his anger, would be a brute ; but a wise and good father might well bring such a child to tears of sorrow for his fault, and that by the methods of gentleness and to the end of joy.

The problem is also different because there is high virtue in sorrow, because we could not have sympathy without sorrow, or repentance without it. So long as men make

mistakes and commit sins, sorrow is a necessity: we should be less than human if we hurt another through inadvertence without being sorry—still less if we hurt him deliberately and could feel no remorse. So long as there are misfortunes, accidents, convulsions of nature—so long that is, as this finite world exists—we could not be good without the capacity for grief: even those whom we call heartless, because their central selfishness has destroyed their imagination, are affected by the misery of others when it is really brought home to them. Nor could we wish not to feel sorrow at our own misfortunes: we are capable of deep unhappiness because we are human; and it is better to have the quality of tears than a wooden mind and a stony heart. The capacity for sorrow is necessary, in this life at least, to the existence of happiness: its incidence is mostly due to our fundamental freedom, for we should hardly be unhappy if we were living machines. We are placed, partly free and intelligent creatures, with our feet in the mechanism of matter: we feel, because we are spirits; our sorrows are due to the clash of matter with spirit, and the war of good with evil; and in truth the bitterest

sorrow of all, the pangs of bereavement, are due to the necessity that we should all one day get free from matter and escape from our imperfection. Our heavenly Father takes his children back out of this world, where they have been to school, because he has reserved some better thing for us. Sorrow comes to us through these laws of our existence—laws without which existence were not—and comes through this good purpose of God ; but such grief is no more contrived by God for our torment than are the instruments of the surgeon contrived for the excruciation of his patients.

We have, then, been less prone to deface the image of God in the matter of sorrow than in that of physical pain. We have ranged him with our human ignorance and cruelty in ascribing the infliction of disease to him ; but we have not forgotten that he must nevertheless be the giver of happiness. Yet it may be well still to ask ourselves whether God ever directly inflicts sorrow, even for a higher joy. Is it not more true rather to say that sorrow, like pain and disease, is part of the necessary system of law by which life has become possible, and like sin is the inevitable

result of our freedom, and of our consequent goodness and greatness? To freedom indeed most sorrow is indirectly due, and directly to our own sin, folly, or sickness, or to the sin, folly, or sickness of others. Even sorrow for sin, beneficent though it is, cannot be ascribed to the direct act of God; it springs, as the sin did, from man's will, and God's participation lies in the subsequent pardon and grace.

Does God, then, after all, ever inflict even sorrow? we ask. Is he, after all, the author of sorrow in any sense but that in which he is the author of sin, having made a world in which, for our better good, both are possible? "Ye therefore now have sorrow," said Christ to his disciples, and showed them that their sorrow was due to imperfect faith, and that it would be turned into joy—telling them to ask of the Father, in order that their joy might be fulfilled. Is not God indeed the consistent author of our happiness, as of our virtue, willing nothing but that, tenderly regretting the sorrow that must come, as a father regrets the sorrow of a child? Is he not indeed a perfect Father, in whom is no variableness nor shadow cast by turning?

If this be so, it must remain none the less

true that pain and sorrow ought, when they come, to be used for noble ends ; though they be due to subsidiary causes, to causes lower than God. So a son may be ennobled by confronting misfortunes, which his father did not send him. If pain is evil, and sorrow is not of God, it does not therefore follow that they may not do us good. All the value of this probationary existence must lie in our struggle with evil, our painful, sorrowful struggle ; yet evil is but the shadow left by the Sun, the horrid darkness where the Light is not. Pain and sorrow can ennoble, though not always ; for often they harden, often they weaken, sometimes they stun. It is said that no one is made noble without pain, *Niemand wird ohne Leiden geadelt* ; but we cannot tell if this is true, since the experiment has never been tried. We only know that no one *has* lived without pain both of heart and body ; we know also that some are thwarted and twisted by it, and some broken ; that some learn deep and precious lessons from it ; that some great souls win through to splendid triumph.

Some are spoilt by sorrow and degraded by pain. Let us not ignore this common fact, because we have a theory about the beneficence

of pain which we do not wish to give up. Neither let us forget that there is a discipline of joy, and that joy is by great souls also used to noble ends. Happiness is not only the reward of goodness; it is also one of its means; and it is happiness, not sorrow, which is the normal condition of human existence: it is in fact the manifest plan of God for the world, as health and beauty are; and, even with animals who are devoured by beasts of prey, the final tragedy is but one moment set against many thousands of contented hours.

But if happiness is our normal lot, if it is the cry of mere atheism that man's life is 'nasty, brutish, and short,' then happiness must have its great and constant use; nor must we be led, by our admiration of sacrifice and our well-justified dread of selfish hedonism, to forget that the pursuit of happiness is as necessary to life, and to that which makes life worth living, as is the readiness to give it up at the call of duty. What is generally wrong about us is not our desire for happiness, which as a matter of fact we all possess and exercise, but our seeking it for ourselves and not for others: it is not wrong to love ourselves; Christ only bids us love our neighbour no less. Happi-

ness is God's chief method, his purpose, and his promise. We know that this is true in practice. We know that there is no good fruitage from gloom and depression, that the best things come out of an enthusiasm of great joy, activity, and hope, like the gaiety of St. Francis and his companions—like, we may be sure, the cheerfulness of the Apostles when they enjoyed the sunshine of their Master's presence, whose joy was in them, as St. John tells us, that their joy might be fulfilled.

Do we not need to avoid cant in dealing with this subject?—we that have not the justification of the ascetics, who, however mistaken was their ideal, were at least true to it. We need to be sincere about our pleasures. Is it true that happiness is a prime condition of spiritual as it is of bodily health, and that we are the better for amusements and games? We habitually act as if it were true, and it surely is. Is it true that the Spirit of God is manifested in novels and plays as well as in hagiology and religious art? In modern times we habitually assume that it is. We know indeed that much literature has evil mingled in it,—though the good enormously preponderates, and the acute didactic power of novels, and of

the drama, is one of the chief causes of that extraordinary modern change in the human heart to which reference has been already made: but we know also that there are some things untrue and vain, and even unchristian, in pious books, and in the lives of the saints; and that many of our popular religious pictures, and most of our painted glass, present so weak and sentimental a picture of our Master as to create a really pernicious form of idolatry. It is surely by the good or evil in all these things that we have to judge them, not by their pleasantness or unpleasantness—though Heaven knows our common religious art and our ecclesiastical craftsmanship are unpleasant enough. A thing is not evil merely because it gives pleasure, or good because it gives pain.

Disease and disorder are not good things, nor is depression; else ought we to spread cultures of pathogenic germs, and arrange railway accidents, and attend gloomy sermons, and drape the world in black. Only, God has draped the world in green, and has given us love, and laughter, and little children; and our lives and our homes, and our merry-making, and our art, and our dress are meant to be in harmony with the gorgeous loveliness of the

picture which he creates. Is there no soul of virtue in all this, no effort, no striving, no discipline?

Assuredly there is a discipline of joy; and, if God is indeed what he manifests himself to be in his works, if religion indeed consists of whatsoever things are true, and lovely, and of good report, then there is a godly way of building homes, of entertaining, of joking, and of playing games, as well as of suffering, enduring, sacrificing—a holy living as well as a holy dying. It is bad to monopolize our lives in enjoyment, it is bad also to monopolize them in sorrow; for it is the cares as well as the pleasures of this world that choke the word—'cares of the age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things' that are not of the divine sowing.

It is in the avoidance of the 'other things' that the Christian way lies, not in the avoidance of things that bring happiness, but in the avoidance of things that are evil and bring misery. Whatever traces of the old asceticism may remain in our speech, we know in our hearts that we have parted with it for ever, and that because it was not of Christ. The old

asceticism was the self-infliction of pain, discomfort, or unhappiness, because it was thought to be pleasing to God; and when it was done for the hope of Heaven, this was because God was thought to reward with bliss the pain that had given him pleasure. The intermediate semi-asceticism from which we are emerging was not indeed the infliction but only the endurance or pain, because it was thought to be pleasing to God. The true Asceticism (if we can recover the original use of the word ἄσκησις, the training and exercise of the ἀσκητής, the craftsman or athlete) is the balancing, co-ordinating, disciplining, and exercising of all our faculties for the best and highest ends. This we know to be the very condition of moral excellence, as of all health and power; and we know that it involves many a conflict, many a sacrifice, much abstinence, much real fasting, and almsgiving, and prayer. Its end is not sorrow, but happiness, the happiness of all creatures, and surely too the happiness of the Creator; for he is immanent in his creation, and so far from our sorrow bringing satisfaction to him, he must suffer with us. This also is the lesson of the Cross. The happiness of God cannot be complete till all sorrow is done away, and his

heart no longer wounded by the pain of man, his child and care.

We know that all our strength and virtue have come through action, effort, struggle—*das Leben heisst Streben*; and that this struggle is beset with things to hurt us, that sometimes we avoid them, sometimes we fight them, and sometimes we are wounded. But surely they are enemies, evil things; and we are, like Childe Roland, battling through them,—like some pioneer throwing himself against sharp obstacles because he must go on.

We have to be ready for grief, to be prepared not to barter any better thing for relief therefrom; to school ourselves that we may encounter it, and bear it bravely when it comes, and use it in the finest way.

But it is not the will of God. His will is that his children should have each one a healthy, wise, useful, and happy life—a healthy birth, a happy youth; a maturity as healthy, as happy, and more useful and more wise; a healthy, wise, and happy old age; a healthy death, and a happy end which shall merge into the perfect experience of his love.

CHAPTER 14

Conclusion

CHRIST brought a new revelation and a new virtue into the world, a revelation and a virtue so new that the infant Church had to use a newly-coined word for it—*agape*, love, not as passion or natural affection, but love supernatural, strenuous, active, and universal. In the West the word came to be translated *caritas*, charity. Having but little understanding of this virtue, which is the key to all theology and the power of all human redemption, our forefathers debased the word till it sometimes meant no more than a kindly tolerance, as early as the age of Caxton, and now generally is used as a synonym of almsgiving, so that we even have a society for the organization of charity. Perhaps we shall recover the value of the word, as we attain the virtue and understand the revelation.

Charity is the quality that will enable our hearts to know God, since God is charity,—the

love of our brother whom we have seen, and of all creatures ; and the love too of all good things, principally the love of truth and of beauty. But multitudes of Christians have neglected their brother, or cheated and wronged him, hated, fought, persecuted him. Whole sections of the Church have set themselves deliberately to resist the incoming of new knowledge, have persecuted those who sought honestly after truth ; whole sections of the Church have made a religion of ugliness, have rendered their worship repellent, and their temples a standing negation of the fair beauty of God. And the scientist says, This is not for me, and the artist says, This is not for me, and the statesmen and the reformer say, We can make the world better without religion.

And the professionals of religion have sometimes gone complacently on, raising their clouds of obscurantism, failing to discern the signs of the times, callous to the cry of suffering, blind to the urgency of the moral issues. They have concentrated their fury upon this controversy or upon that, and have drowned with their clamour the voice of the saints who quietly seek after God. The main fact of religion,

the love of the true God, without which all else is dust, has been constantly forgotten; because one age after another has occupied itself with some derivative secondary matter, with some inference or implication, often with some mere scheme or theory, sometimes even with a custom or a ceremony. Being derivative, such questions are naturally controversial; being controversial, they have proved only too naturally attractive. We habitually talk and act as if religion consisted of nothing else except some theory or custom with which our pulpits happen to be ringing; Christendom has torn itself in pieces over theories about the Church or the Sacraments, or the Bible or the Atonement; and has forgotten that these things will be worthless to us if our hearts derive them from a false god. Surely such controversies would never have driven us apart at all, if our forefathers had been pure in their knowledge of God, and consistent in accepting his love, his wisdom and holiness. The Churches have erred, in precept and practice, and have thrown the modern world into a scepticism half regretful and half scornful, not because the doctrines of the Church are false, nor because the experience of her saints has been mistaken, but

because her doctrines have so often been put in the wrong order, because secondary things have been exalted into means of salvation, and the essential has been obscured. Such lack of proportion is as fatal to religion as to ethics; a truth may become a lie thereby, as a virtue may become a vice. Indeed the heresy which one Church condemns in another is generally but a truth in the wrong place—and nearly always a truth which the condemning Church conspicuously lacks. We constantly act as if the presentment of truth was like the work of some poor artist, who should say, 'I have all the colours on my palette, and therefore it does not matter how I mix them together.' We may have all the colours that are in the Gospels, and yet may make a very different picture of Christianity — a little charity of reduced tone, much sentiment, a little wisdom, inclined to fade on exposure to the light, a timid dash of beauty, mixed with large emphatic pigments composed precariously out of scattered biblical phrases or the glosses of tradition.

So it is that we have vexed the world with Christianities distorted sometimes out of recognition; we have made pictures so repellent as

to frighten away the little children ; we have argued that because Christ unites men to the Father, therefore God is a forensic tyrant claiming his victim ; that because Christ taught fellowship to his disciples, and because a fellowship implies some kind of public servants, therefore the essence of Christianity is in the form of the ministry ; that, although he warned his followers against searching the scriptures with the idea that they would thus find eternal life, Christianity consists of an infallible Bible, mostly Jewish, and of that Bible only ; that although he warned his disciples against setting up any man as master or father, Christianity consists in obedience to an earthly 'papa' ; we have made a battlefield of the sacraments, and caused our theological formulas to bristle with anathemas ; we have worshipped images theological, literary, pictorial, which represent a man who could not possibly have said or done the things which our Lord said and did upon the earth. We habitually judge the religion and the character of others by their ecclesiastical politics, by their views upon disputed points, by their neglect or observance of fasts and festivals, of new moons and sabbaths, or even by the cut of their clothes or the trim

of their hair. We are strangely tolerant of hideous and crying evils, strangely acquiescent in selfishness and quiet brutality, so long as our little notions are respected, strangely careless of gross heresies about the very nature of God, because our ears are strained to lesser things. It is not that the lesser things are unessential—they are as essential as fine mouldings are to architecture, as semitones are to music. It is only that we forget their proportion.

Is not this the weakness of Christianity to-day? Burdened with the lumber of ancient controversies, the Church staggers along, shunning attack, skilfully cultivating the niceties of defence—instead of leaping forward in confidence and unanimity to justify God to the people. If we all worshipped the same divine perfection in God, all good Christians would become at one, for lesser things would fall into their place and divide them no longer; and the multitudes of wise and good men who now stand aloof from the Churches would join the same fellowship and worship the same God. The danger of Christendom is never in the alienation of bad men or foolish men, but in the alienation of those very souls who are

most naturally Christian. The weakness of Christendom to-day lies not only in the repulsion of the Churches one from another, but also in that alienation of half the educated world within Christendom, which is due to the idolatry of Christians, to the false pictures we produce, the false images we set up.

That is why the first prayer of the Paternoster is that God's name may be hallowed. Holy it is already, but we can prevent its holiness being known and understood ; and the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, because we ourselves unwittingly blaspheme it through our idolatries. "Hallowed be thy name" is the first petition ; because if God's holiness is not understood, there can be no true religion, and no betterment of the world. We dispute about the validity of sacraments ; but this at least is certain, that there can be no perfect validity of any good thing, when God's name is made unholy, his nature depraved in the minds of men.

There is no evil in God—no cruelty, for he is love ; no folly or narrowness, for his wisdom is infinite : no capriciousness, for his will is eternal ; no ugliness, for he is altogether

lovely. He is Light, and in him is no darkness at all, not a shadow, nor a speck.

By this faith in the perfection of his fatherhood, in the mastery of his creative art, the fullness of his love, the mighty measure of his infinite wisdom, must all else be judged; and all good men will most surely unite in this faith, till the Light is apprehended in our darkness, and the revelation of Christ becomes the World Religion, the faith of all religious men, as it implicitly already is; and good men will then work together that God's Kingdom may come indeed.

But before the corporate triumph of goodness can come about, it is necessary that God's will be done by every man, and this can only be if his name is made holy. We hear much in religious circles to-day about the danger of heresy and error; and this is true, for an age which has received so much new knowledge as ours would be unworthy indeed, stagnant and corrupt, if it did not try to apply its knowledge—and make many mistakes in so doing. But is it nothing that there is also the hope of a fundamental orthodoxy, a common belief in the true nature of God, such as the world never had before? Will

not this more than counterbalance our heresies about other issues that are great indeed but yet not so great? And will not this enable us to ride buoyantly and swiftly, not without triumph, through the storms that are before us?

It will be something if all the time we are hallowing God's name, and learning to do his will. Those who think that God desires us to shut our eyes to new knowledge cannot do his will, but can only win the distrust of the wise, and hide the Gospel in darkness. Those who think that God would have us turn aside from his beauty, cannot do his perfect will; they may blind themselves to all the harmony and significance in form, colour, sound and scent, action and expression, to the services and courtesies of human intercourse, to the revelations of poetry and romance; but they will in the end only narrow themselves upon the greedier cares and grosser pleasures of this world. In so far as the people follow them they make the world hideous and degrading; they drive the men of genius into other camps, partial indeed and impoverished, they turn the Church universal into a sect of the commonplace.

Yet how blind we still are to beauty, and

how deaf—how indifferent and brutal in our defacement of God's worship and of the places where we worship him! Artists, poets, musicians watch what is called the religious world, and turn from it in angry contempt. Yet what can our religion be—what our notions of truth or our vision of God—without that haunting, half-revealed spirit of beauty, which in the perfect world will confront us as truth itself?—

> Was wir als Schönheit hier empfunden,
> Wird einst als Warheit uns entgegengehn.

Thus it has been, and is to-day. Round every church and chapel there is a small knot of adherents; but the members of Christendom, as a whole, rich and poor, in their multitudes, do not look to their local church, nor to the leaders of religion, for guidance or for inspiration. A minister to them, a clergyman, a bishop, is something they tolerate, or in many places actively dislike, something to them rather stupid, rather stuffy perhaps, unwelcome and ugly, a trifle grotesque. Leadership they desire, inspiration they need, ideals they must have, but they find them elsewhere. The practising religious minority of Europe and America is active about several things;

Anglicans, Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Easterns, have their ideals, and are zealous about various subjects, some great, some small, many polemical. But is it always the will of God that inspires us, individually and corporately, his wisdom, his beauty, above all his love? Is it always the gifts of the Spirit that men look to us for, such gifts as wisdom and knowledge, counsel and understanding, or such fruits as love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness?

We cannot do God's will unless we understand his nature. Those who think that God is cruel 'for our good,' if they sincerely believe it, will themselves drift into cruelty; those who think that God does not always forgive, will themselves cease forgiving—even once; those who think that God hates his enemies will not succeed in loving theirs; those who do not understand that God loves the criminals and outcasts, and all low and unpleasant people, and blesses them so far as they will let him, and showers good things upon them, will themselves be cold and loveless, self-seeking and self-righteous, and wickedly respectable; those who believe that God chastises sinners, and is preparing torments for heretics,

that he tortures and massacres us for our good,—if they are as sincere, as logical, as able, as devoted, as free from passion and vice as a Torquemada, will themselves become as cruel as a Torquemada. If they think that God can in any circumstance do evil that good may come, they will in many circumstances do the same. And finally, if they think that God is so ignorant of human nature as to try and make his children virtuous by the fear of hell, —so immoral as to try and make us holy by stirring up our cowardice and selfishness, and so vindictive as to add one pang to the loss of those who fail,—then their religion will bring into their hearts, thus garnished with false ideas, other devils worse than the first. They will not find grace through the worship of their false god ; but will grow into such types as are only too familiar—the mentally idolatrous, bigoted and petty ; the proselytizers and deniers, arrogant, intolerant, pugnacious ; the spiritually selfish, seeking the best of both worlds for themselves, giving no service to the weak and poor ; the cold-hearted, without understanding, trust, or kindness, alien to all fellowship, who bring the Gospel into disrepute.

The heresy of the scholar, conscientiously unable to accept some historical statement as true, or some doctrine of theology, is surely a small thing, compared with these deep heresies of the heart, these false images of the Very God which are graven with the tools of our wickedness. Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees! May it not be that we are meant to endure some turmoil in our theology, and to turn our minds from being anxious about the morrow of dogmatics, to the greater task of hopefully calling together those who try to do the will of God, that they may proclaim the faith so clear to-day in the immaculate Fatherhood of the eternal Love?

We are the product of religion. What we do depends upon what we are, and what we are depends upon our thoughts about God. He is indeed the same, unchanged by man's ideas, but man is himself changed to the very depths by the vapours which rise up from the ocean of human life and cloud over the face of God. Man may still see the Light through the mist, though discoloured and confined, greyed, it may be, and cold, or reddened and angry;

or he may receive its brightness through the innumerable reflections of dust-specks in the sky, though the Light itself is blotted by a cloud; or he may see no daylight at all, but only a reflection in some bright satellite that wanders in the darkness; or he may be conscious merely of the lamps which, dotted here and there by human ingenuity, give no life, but only a little ring of light to work by. Or he may be in a grosser darkness still.

Something like this have been man's thoughts about God, in their varying degrees of error, their idolatries, their cacotheisms. Some such progress out of darkness, through artificial lights, to mirrored Light, and obscured Light, was the progress of the ancient world, seeing through a glass darkly; and, because men have felt this instinctively, we speak of the 'revelation' of God—his ἀποκάλυψις, or uncovering—by Jesus Christ. He did not imagine a new God, he only lifted the veil, and disclosed the heavenly Father as he had always been, and is in all eternity. The necessary thing is that men should worship God in truth, should see him as he is, and should not worship anything that he is not. And Jesus Christ showed that those would be

able to see God whose hearts are pure. From the unsullied nature there rise no mists to obscure the face of God.

Purity of motive, purity of thought, purity of character and of action, which is the quality of the men of honest and good heart, is interpreted in all the Gospels, but most categorically in the Fourth, as the condition brought about by love. We might indeed carry our illustration a step further and say that love precipitates the vapours so that they become dew; for indeed the vices of men are but natural human qualites that have risen beyond our control and thicken like a cloud about us.

But this love must itself be pure and perfect, actively beneficent, as well as free from every trace of cruelty. We men are apt to vacillate between vindictiveness and carelessness; and one popular tendency at the present day is to interpret God's fatherhood as a condition of easy good-nature. If he were indeed a being who did not mind our ill-doing, he would be a bad father. The man who sees mere indifference in the character of God is a man whose own charity is obscured by a selfish liking of ease and pleasant converse: but the pure in heart are the world's reformers, because they cannot

be content with the evil that other men accept; they know that God must hate all evil, must be the living power against it, the source of all that is done to withstand and remove it. *They* do not increase the sorrow of the world either by slackness or revenge; they feel it, and help to bear it—to bear it away. And must it not be so with the Father? He does not inflict suffering, but he shares it, himself suffers with the sorrow of the world, and bears our griefs, not that he may set them down again, but that he may take them away from us. Is not that the undying appeal of the Cross? And does it not mean that God is not only the Creator and Former of the world, but is also continually recreating and reforming it,—calling night and day upon the pure in heart to be fellow-workers with him?

The reader of these chapters may perhaps have asked as he read why we have so urgently tried to distinguish between what God wills and what he allows,—between the good that he deliberately contrives, and the evil that happens through the limitations of those finite conditions within which he works. What does it matter, people often say, whether misery and

anguish are his will or not, since at least they do exist in sad profusion under his providence? Why not be content in our sorrow to say, 'It is God's will,' if it comforts us to say so?

Because the two most tremendous facts in the world depend upon the distinction: the character of God, and the destiny of man. If it be true that the unequal miseries of our mortal lot are not the will of God, then we know that he is as Christ described him—all wise, all loving, and all just. And if it be true that he hates the sight of our misery, then we know that, in struggling to reduce it, we are working the works of God. Sin and suffering are possible, because the world could not exist without their possibility; but they are not God's creation, and therefore they can be continually reduced. They can be reduced by our loving God better, and his goodness better, by our becoming more like God in his beauty, by our having more of the truth which is God's mind. This is the glorious inspiration which we gain, when we know that our Father in heaven hates the misery in the world. All things work together for good, to them that love God.

And the misery is being reduced. We fight for the welfare of mankind, not as uncertainly, because we are fighting for God, and already we see fort after grim fort behind us and dismantled. We fight against the cruel enemies of our race, not only that God's name may be hallowed, but also that his kingdom may come and his true will be done, on earth as in the unshadowed perfection of heaven.

What we are depends upon what we believe, what nations are depends upon their religion, what humanity will one day become depends upon what every man will one day learn to think about God. By this faith in perfect Charity, we shall have the hope that makes our work assured, and our life triumphant.

Printed by A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., London and Oxford

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

The Parson's Handbook. For Parsons and others, on the Management of the Parish Church and its Services. Eighth Edition. Oxford University Press. 6*s.*

The Server's Handbook. For Parish Clerks and Servers. Fourth Edition. Oxford University Press. 1*s.*

The English Liturgy, with additional Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for the Black Letter Days, and for special occasions. An Altar Book by the Revs. PERCY DEARMER, W. H. FRERE, and the Ven. S. M. TAYLOR. With a Preface by the Bishop of Winchester. Third Edition. Rivingtons. 2 guineas, in sheets.

The Sanctuary. A Book for Communicants, with Private Devotions, etc. Fourth Edition. Rivingtons. 7*d.*, 1*s.*, 1*s.* 4*d.*, 2*s.* 6*d.*; with Prayer Book, 1*s.* 6*d.*, 2*s.*, 3*s.* 6*d.*

The Ornaments of the Ministers. With 41 Plates and 34 Figures. Second Edition. Mowbrays. 1*s.* 6*d.*

Body and Soul: An Enquiry into the effect of Religion upon Health, with a description of Christian Works of Healing from the New Testament to the Present Day. 9th impression. Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons. 2*s.* 6*d.*

Everyman's History of the English Church. A popular History, copiously illustrated. Mowbrays. 1*s.*, 1*s.* 6*d.*, and 2*s.*

Reunion and Rome. With Prefatory Letter by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. Mowbrays. 1*s.*, and 1*s.* 6*d.*

The Dragon of Wessex. A Historical Novel of the Days of Alfred. Mowbrays. 2*s.* 6*d.*, and 3*s.* 6*d.*

Everyman's History of the Prayer Book. With 99 Illustrations. Mowbrays. 1*s.* 6*d.*, 2*s.*, and 2*s.* 6*d.*

Etc., etc.

Also the following pamphlets :—

Is "Ritual" Right? Mowbrays. 2*d.* In cloth boards, 6*d.*

Loyalty to the Prayer Book. Mowbrays. 2*d.*

The Training of a Christian according to the Prayer Book and Canons. Mowbrays. 2*d.*

The Communion of Saints. Mowbrays. 2*d.* In cloth, 6*d.*

The Prayer Book: What it is, and how we should use it. Fifth Edition. Mowbrays. 1*d.* Illustrated Edition, 6*d.*

The Church and Social Questions. Mowbrays. 1*d.*

The Social Teaching of the Church Catechism. Mowbrays. 1*d.*

The Inner Health Movement. Mowbrays. 1*d.*

Etc., etc.

Also the following forms of service :—*Five Forms for Bidding Prayer*, Mowbrays, 3*d.* *A Form for Unction and the Laying-on of Hands*, Mowbrays, 3*d.* *A Litany of Labour*, Mowbrays, ½*d.* *A Memorial Service*, Mowbrays, 3*d.*

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD., LONDON AND OXFORD

The Invisible Glory

Selected Sermons preached by the late Most Rev. G. HOWARD WILKINSON, D.D. With a Preface by the Lord Bishop of London. With Photogravure Frontispiece. Sixth Edition. Cloth, 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

The Heavenly Vision

A Second Volume of Selected Sermons preached by the late Most Rev. G. HOWARD WILKINSON, D.D. With Photogravure Frontispiece. Second Edition. Cloth, 5*s.* net.

Occasional Sermons

By the late Rev. Canon ROBINSON DUCKWORTH, D.D., C.V.O. Edited by G. E. Troutbeck. With Portrait. Cloth, 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

Meditations on the Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ

By the Rev. G. B. BUDIBENT, M.A. With a Preface by the Rev. P. N. Waggett, M.A., S.S.J.E. Cloth, 1*s.* 6*d.*

Creative Revelation

Four Lectures on the Miraculous CHRIST. By the Rev. J. G. SIMPSON, D.D., Canon and Precentor of S. Paul's. Cloth, 2*s.* net.

The Revelation of the Lamb

A Course of Addresses given to Clergy in Retreat, Cuddesdon, October, 1912. By the Rev. J. O. F. MURRAY, D.D., Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge. Cloth, 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

Spiritual Letters of Edward King, D.D.

(Late Lord Bishop of Lincoln)

With Gravure Frontispiece. Edited by the Rev. B. W. Randolph, D.D. Fourth Edition. Cloth, 2*s.* net; Lambskin, 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

The Interior Life, and other Addresses

By the Rev. GEORGE CONGREVE, M.A., of the Society of S. John the Evangelist, Cowley. Cloth, 5*s.* net.

Our Companion by the Way

Retreat Addresses. By the Rev. W. F. LA TROBE-BATEMAN, M.A. Seventh Edition. Cloth, 1*s.* net.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD., LONDON AND OXFORD

The Christian use of the Psalter

By the Rev. A. R. WHITHAM, M.A., Principal of Culham Training College, Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford. Cloth, 1*s.* net; Leather, 2*s.* net.

The Psalter in Latin and English

(Prayer Book Version)

With an Introduction by the Right Rev. J. H. BERNARD, D.D., D.C.L., Bishop of Ossory. Printed in Red and Black. Cloth, 4*s.* 6*d.* net. India Paper Edition: Italian leather, 6*s.* 6*d.* net; Straightgrain, 7*s.* 6*d.* net; Lambskin, 7*s.* 6*d.* net; Morocco, 9*s.* 6*d.* net.

On the Book of Common Prayer

Five Sermons preached in S. Paul's Cathedral. By the Rev. W. C. E. NEWBOLT, M.A., Canon and Chancellor of S. Paul's. Cloth, 1*s.* net; Leather 2*s.* net.

The Atonement

By the Rev. A. V. MAGEE, Vicar of S. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, N.W. Cloth, 1*s.* net; Leather, 2*s.* net.

The Holy Mount

Meditations on the Transfiguration of our LORD as Revealing the Life of Prayer. By the Rev. JESSE BRETT, L.Th. Cloth, 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

Some Vital Questions

By the Rev. C. C. BELL, M.A., Canon of York. A Series of Seven Addresses dealing with modern ideas of Christianity in relation to the Catholic Church. Cloth, 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

The Hope of our Fathers

An Anthology of Anglican Devotion in Prose and Verse. Compiled and Edited by the Rev. PERCY H. OSMOND, M.A. Cloth, 3*s.* 6*d.* net; Pastegrain, 5*s.* net; Lambskin, 6*s.* net; Persian velvet yapp, 6*s.* 6*d.* net; Rutland morocco, 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

The Life of the Christian

A selection of Sermons by the late Rev. Canon HERBERT C. POLLOCK, M.A. Edited by the Rev. H. T. Knight, M.A. With an Introduction by the Lord Bishop of London. Cloth, 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD., LONDON AND OXFORD

231.8R
D341

Dearmer, Percy D.D.

False Gods.

231.8R
D347